This Perspectives activity contains three articles, all with emphasis on social considerations in the elderly, with emphases on risk factors for dementia and treatment of Parkinson’s Disease.

The first article seeks to describe the validity and reliability of the Fun and Social Engagement Evaluation (FUSE). The authors explain that this is an important topic because lack of physical activity and low social engagement are risk factors for dementia and could impact the rate of decline associated with dementia. Furthermore, physical inactivity has been identified by the World Health Organization as a leading risk factor for global mortality. Nursing home residents were evaluated using the FUSE during “Bingocize” sessions; the program combines a bingo-like game and physical activity and is scaled for differing cognitive and physical levels of ability. Results indicate that the FUSE is a valid and reliable method to measure engagement, and this is important because this measure can be recommended to nursing homes to measure engagement, as well as used in future research.

The second article attempts to determine which of a variety of factors were associated with communicative participation and measured this based on the social network size of an individual. The author feels that this is important because social isolation is linked to cognitive decline and depression, both of which are risk factors for developing dementia. This study builds on previous research related to social participation and communication as predictors of successful health outcomes. Two research questions are addressed: What numbers of communication partners exist in the self-reported social network of older adults? And what factors are included in a model for predicting the social network size of older adults? They studied 337 seniors in Central Arkansas by collecting interviews and conducting standardized assessments. Results indicate that cognition and education are factors that are related to communicative participation. The results of this study, along with additional literature on this topic, suggest that there is benefit in recognizing a decrease in communicative participation and the role that cognitive decline may play in restricting communicative participation.

The final article describes the program developed at Long Island University Brooklyn, which is multidisciplinary in nature, in contrast to previous treatment models which have traditionally focused on a monodisciplinary approach. In the past decade, there has been a shift from monodisciplinary models and research to a multidisciplinary approach, which is more effective in holistically treating the multifaceted effects of Parkinson’s Disease (PD), resulting in better outcomes and social participation for individuals with PD. The article describes use of the Fitness for PD exercise program twice per week for ten weeks, targeting strength, balance, agility, stretching, and aerobic exercises. Students at the university are engaged in taking vitals, facilitating resistance training, and enhancing safety; students and participants find benefit in working together.
One hour Speech Clinic for PD sessions are conducted after each fitness class, including voice evaluations and therapy focusing on maximizing voice production and improving breathing patterns. The first half of sessions are conducted in game format, which encourages interpersonal interactions and collaboration and facilitates carryover into conversational contexts. Sessions incorporate Motor Learning Principles, LSVT LOUD, and respiratory exercises. The second half of sessions are conducted in whole-group format and speech exercises in small groups.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
You will be able to:
- identify the benefit of exercise and social engagement for nursing home residents
- list at least two potential consequences of social isolation in the older adult population
- explain the rationale for multidisciplinary programs combining exercise and speech therapy for individuals with PD

CONTENTS

Measurement of Social Engagement of Nursing Home Residents During an Exercise Program by Jean Neils-Strunjas, K. Jason Crandall, Brian Weiler, Annika Gabbard, Caroline Wood, and Xiuhua Ding

Examining Social Networks in Older Adults: What Predicts Communicative Participation? by Melanie Meeker, Kimberly C. McCullough, Gary H. McCullough, and Usenime Akpanudo

A Community-Based Program for Exercise and Social Participation for Individuals With Parkinson's Disease: A Multidisciplinary Model by Gemma Moya-Galé, Amerigo Rossi, and Rebecca A. States

PROGRAM HISTORY and IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Start date: February 1, 2022
End date: February 1, 2027

To earn continuing education credit, you must complete the learning assessment on or before February 1, 2027.

This course is offered for 0.20 ASHA CEUs (Intermediate level, Professional area).