1. **Title:**

Volunteer leader recruitment, retention and training: predictors and enablers

2. **Author(s):**

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3. **Key words:** real-world evaluation; volunteer lay leaders; arthritis self-management, evidence-based behavioral interventions

4. **Abstract text:**

   a) ***Background*:** To reduce implementation costs, many health education programs are facilitated by volunteers, however, recruiting and retaining volunteers presents challenges to sustainable implementation. Over two years, 114 volunteers were recruited and trained to lead Walk With Ease (WWE), an educational walking program. Only 51% of trainees initiated a WWE class. This presentation examines predictors of leader initiation using mixed methods.

   b) ***Methods*** Volunteers self-selected into online or in-person training. Demographics, previous teaching experience, and training satisfaction were collected via surveys (n=114). We examined differences between volunteers who did and didn't lead classes via logistic regression. Interviews with volunteers that initiated (*n*=49) were examined to determine the quality and utility of the leader training program.

   c) ***Results*** Trainees were mostly female (89.5%), paid staff (73.7%), and attended in-person training (71.9%). Adjusted models showed individuals holding clinical degrees [OR=6.4, 95% CI=(2.0,22.3)], and certifications in other health education programs were more likely to initiate in volunteering than those without [OR=17.8, 95% CI=(5.6,66.3)]. No difference in initiation was found between paid and unpaid volunteers. Qualitative findings demonstrated that in-person training provided leaders with needed hands-on experience, but online training was suitable for those who had previous teaching experience. There were no significant quantitative differences between satisfaction scores based on training mode.

   d) ***Conclusions*** Targeted recruitment of future lay leaders is needed to improve trainee initiation and reduce costs. We discuss implications for improving the proportion of trained individuals who lead classes, compare and contrast the merits of each training mode, and offer considerations for future research.