



Care for the Physical Condition of the Elderly who are not Members of the *Círculo de Abuelos* (Cuba)

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Date read: 5 December 2017



Editor:

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Departament de la Presidència
Institut Nacional d'Educació
Física de Catalunya (INEFC)

ISSN: 2014-0983

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Section:

Doctoral Dissertations

Original language:

Spanish

Cover:

New Olympic Sports for
Tokyo 2020. Climbing.
Photo: Climbing. Asian Games
2018. Women's combined final.
Competes Kim Ja-in from South
Korea. Climbing leader.
JSC Sport Climbing.
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Abstract

The provision of care to the elderly is an extraordinarily important problem, both internationally and in the conditions prevailing in Cuba. Many elderly persons engage in physical activity independently, in most cases with empirical knowledge, lacking a proper personalisation which would meet their organic and psychological needs, and without a regulation that would foster the adaptative processes that inevitably occur in this stage of life. Care for the physical condition of the elderly through sports centres and Health areas has failed to venture beyond the traditional and fundamentally institutional approach, thus foregoing a holistic approach which entails the practice of physical activity independently.

Theoretical and empirical methods were used to conduct this study. Basic and descriptive statistics were employed to organise and characterise the data recorded in the study. Hypothetical tests for related samples were applied for data comparison, the Wilcoxon test, and the Mann-Whitney test was used to compare two independent samples.

The study was conducted in the municipality of Las Tunas (Cuba). An intentionally selected sample of 1,015 elderly persons, 100 family physicians and 52 community physical activity teachers was used to ascertain how physical condition behaved.

The diagnosis allowed us to identify the needs evinced in care for the physical condition of the elderly, which helped to distinguish the differences between the members and non-members of the *Círculos de Abuelos*.

A three-tier intervention strategy was designed: institutional, community and individual, with actions geared towards the provision of care for the physical condition of the elderly, focusing on non-members of the *Círculos de Abuelos*. A major effort was made in terms of educational intervention, which proved to be decisive in achieving a transformation in the types of motor care.

The particular principles that underpin the strategy emerged from the theoretical foundations defined in the research: coordinated and systematic communication, awareness-raising and the sustainable nature of the actions.

The design of the intervention proposal to improve the care provided for the physical condition of the elderly does not only include their needs, it also considers the professional performance of the experts entrusted with applying it and of those who implement and monitor it, identified in the aforementioned three tiers.

The behaviour of the physical condition of non-members of *Círculos de Abuelos* presented results closer to those of their peers who were members.

Keywords: the elderly, care, physical condition.