

Is the Master's Athlete a Model of Successful Ageing?

Introduction

Dear Masters Swimmer,

At the recent National Swim in Rockhampton, Associate Professor Peter Reaburn from Central Queensland University (and former President of Q'ld AUSSSI) and one of his PhD students, David Geard, were conducting a research project. You may have heard it being announced over the PA at regular intervals while at the meet.

The PhD research is examining the physical, social, and mental health benefits of participating in masters sport. While masters athletes have been suggested as a group of high functioning older adults that are ageing successfully, no research has actually measured this by comparing masters athletes with non-athletes of the same age.

Therefore, the researchers are testing a survey instrument to throw light on this suggestion with the aim of showing policy makers they should be encouraging masters sport (and exercise as medicine) to lower the costs in their health budget!.

While many swimmers at the Nationals did complete the ethically-approved survey – thanks to those that have - we require as many responses as possible to validate this instrument.

Thus, we would greatly appreciate you completing our 10-15 minute on-line survey by simply [clicking here](#) to complete the survey after reading the below Information Sheet.

If you have partner, friends, family or workmates who are over 18 years of age and non-athletes, please spread this message and get them to complete the survey too. We need data from them too.

Peter and David

Information Sheet

Project Overview

Although advances in medical research and health care suggest the older adult is healthier than previous generations, ageing people are still at a higher risk of disease, disability and sickness compared to younger age groups. Therefore, the healthcare system is motivated to identify the behaviors which will allow older adults to navigate later life more successfully.

The master's athlete is frequently proposed as an example of exceptionally high functioning as well as successful ageing. However, a lack of consensus concerning the definition of successful ageing has meant that the successful ageing status of this cohort has never been accurately assessed.

Therefore, this research aims to evaluate the ability of an assessment tool to accurately measure successful ageing and determine if sport participation in later life allows master's athletes to age more successfully than less active, age-matched peers.

Aims

This study aims to investigate and compare the self-rated health status of a group of master's athletes competing at the 2014 National Master's Swimming Championships versus a group of less active and non-competing peers. Additionally, this research will aim to identify an accurate means by which to assess successful ageing for future research use.

Participation procedure

Participation involves completing either an online or hard-copy questionnaire. This questionnaire will ask you about your attitudes and beliefs concerning your perceived physical, mental, cognitive and social health. You will also be asked to indicate your current and past levels of physical activity, and provide answers to a range of demographic questions such as age and gender. The questionnaire consists of 45 items that will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Benefits and risks

By participating in this research you will be entitled to a copy of a brief report on the results of this study. This report will be sent to you if you voluntarily add your email address in the designated area at the end of the questionnaire. AUSSI Masters Swimming will also be sent a copy of the report and be encouraged to circulate it to all members and swimmers who competed at the 2014 National Master's Swimming Championships.

Participants will be exposed to no physical or psychological risk during this study. If you feel uncomfortable about answering any particular question(s), you are free to leave them unanswered.

Confidentiality

All consent forms will be stored electronically or as a hardcopy in a password-protected computer or locked cabinet within the chief investigators office.

Outcomes

Research outcomes will be disseminated by a variety of means including general written reports for media, academic publications such as journal articles or conference papers, including a PhD thesis, and as individual reports for the participants if you advise us of your e-mail voluntarily. The competition organizers and AUSSI Masters Swimming will also be sent copies and encouraged to circulate those widely to all members.

Consent

Consent is totally voluntary and will be provided by you prior to collection of any data with no consequences for non-participation or withdrawal from the study.

Feedback

All feedback will be given to participants in report form with a thorough explanation provided through private consultation or over the phone by one of the principal investigators, depending on the participant's preference.

Questions/further information

For further information please contact:

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Or Peter Reaburn (Principal supervisor):

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Concerns or complaints

If you have any concerns or complaints about the nature and/or conduct of this research project please contact CQUniversity's Office of Research (Tel: 07 4923 2603; Email: ethics@cqu.edu.au; Mailing address: Building 32, CQUniversity, Rockhampton QLD 4702)