Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Science

of

SAMANTHA MICHELLE GRAY

BSc (Simon Fraser University, 2013)


School of Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education

Thursday, December 1, 2016
10:00 a.m.
McKinnon Building
Room 0025

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Ryan E. Rhodes, School of Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Joan Wharf Higgins, School of Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Maureen Ashe, Department of Family Practice, University of British Columbia

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Todd Milford, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

**Background:** Physical activity (PA) is a health protective behaviour that is critical in the reduction of most major chronic diseases. It also provides the participant with psychological benefits. Despite its well-established health benefits, PA engagement is low in the adult population. Women over the age of 60 are the least physically active segment and thus an important target for behaviour change interventions. **Objective:** The purpose of this mixed methods feasibility study was to explore the feasibility of six-week Self-Determination Theory (SDT)-based dance and walking programs for older women. **Design:** This was a parallel, randomized controlled trial with three groups: dance, walking, and wait-list control. This study included the sequential collection of quantitative then qualitative data (sequential explanatory design). **Setting:** This study was conducted in Victoria, BC. **Participants:** Participants were community-dwelling, English-speaking women aged 55-70 years who were not meeting PA guidelines. **Methods:** Data were collected at baseline and two endpoints: post-intervention at six weeks and follow-up at 12 weeks. The primary outcomes were feasibility measures: recruitment, intervention adherence, retention, and satisfaction. Survey data included self-reported PA (GLTQ) and measures of behavioural regulations and psychological needs (SDT constructs) using validated tools (BREQ-2 and PNSE). Qualitative data were collected in the form of open- and close-ended program evaluation questions and during focus group interviews, both occurring at post-intervention (six weeks). **Results:** The feasibility measures suggest that it is feasible to recruit and retain participants and that they were generally satisfied with the programs. Thirty-five of 37 randomized participants completed the study (mean age ± SD = 62.8 ± 4.8), representing a 39% recruitment rate and 95% retention rate. Both programs were highly attended. Exploratory effect sizes for the quantitative measures were promising for conducting a larger-scale trial. Emergent themes highlighted the importance of the leadership component of the group-based PA programs. **Conclusion:** This study had high protocol adherence, promising effect sizes, program evaluation satisfaction, and a recreation centre took on the dance program; these factors provide a foundation for expanding this feasibility trial to a full-scale study.