Living Well with HIV: 5 workshop series on HIV and aging

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ACCM is a volunteer-based community organization working to enhance the quality of life of people living with HIV/AIDS (PHAs), to prevent HIV transmission and to promote community awareness and action.

“Living well with HIV” is part of ACCM’s Treatment Information Program.
“Living well with HIV”

- Is an initiative developed in response to emerging health issues/needs facing the aging PHA population

- In collaboration with primary health care providers, to create, implement, and evaluate a series of workshops as part of a healthy living program for PHAs

- The program will offer practical tools for PHAs i.e. improving memory, developing healthy eating habits and smoking cessation therapy options
Why aging?

- Why did we propose it?
- People living with HIV/AIDS are living longer and doing better as a result of meds
- HOWEVER we still have to deal with issues surrounding aging...
  - cardiovascular disease
  - cancers
  - ↓bone mineral density
- This is in addition to the complications from medications and HIV itself
Objectives

- Improve health outcomes of PHAs who are aging
- Establish a series of 5 health & well-being workshops
- Provide practical tools to improve overall health through specific workshops that PHAs can do on their own & transfer to other PHAs who can not attend
- Increase link with experts to share their knowledge and tools and ↑ ACCM’s capacity to improve services
- Reach as many PHAs as possible by disseminating tools & guides to other AIDS service organisations
Target population

- Aging PHAs
- MSM
- Gay men
- HIV+ women
- PHAs living in poverty

\[ n = 10 - 15 \]

- Max participation
- ↑ interest: possibility of expanding
- Integrate into ACCM’s Treatment Information Program
Workshops

- Nutrition and Vitamins
- Physical Activity
- Smoking Cessation
- HIV & the Brain
- Socialization
Nutrition and Vitamins

- Nutritionist or Naturopath
- Adapted to the needs of aging PHA population
- Nutrition/Vitamins that compliment HIV meds & aging
- Address nutritional and vitamin deficiencies – ensure replacement
- Link with ACCM’s Buyer’s and Vitamins Club
- Gift Certificates offered to participants
Physical Activity

- Adapt exercise regime for individuals living with HIV/AIDS
- Address aging needs and offer practical strategies to deal with them
  - *i.e.* ↓ bone density, cardiovascular disease, muscle atrophy, hypercholesterolemia
- Full spectrum: Aerobic, strength and resistance training, stretching and relaxation
- Free month-pass to local YMCA & reduced annual membership fee
Smoking Cessation

- Smoking Cessation Counsellor from the “Smoke-Free Program” Jewish General Hospital Cancer Prevention Centre

- Focus on the health related benefits of quitting in relation to HIV/AIDS, meds and long-term positive health outcomes

- Offer a free 8-week support program tailored specifically to the needs of PHAs and health related issues
HIV & the Brain

- Neurologist will address the effects of HIV and advancing age on different cognitive abilities i.e. thinking and memory
- Introduction of games, activities, and computer programs to improve cognitive skills
- Install programs on participants’ and ACCM members’ computers so they can be accessed regularly
Socialization

- Work together to identify strategies & ideas to ↓ isolation as we age
- Create social networks
- Expose participants to existing social activities in Montreal and work together to create our own!
- Provide participants with a monthly bus pass to attend workshops and encourage mobility across the city to access social activities
Evaluation

- **Pre-questionnaire**: assess participants’ *levels of satisfaction* prior to participation
- **Workshops**: participants will be asked to complete a questionnaire assessing the each workshop
- **Interview**: qualitative, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with interested individuals who participated in all 5 workshops
- **Post-questionnaire**: 3-months following the completion of workshops: compare pre- and post- levels
- **Results** submitted to an independent evaluator to assess the program and make future recommendations
Expected Outcomes

“Living well with HIV”

- Designed to empower PHAs to take control of their health and maximize health outcomes as they age.

- PHAs will have an increased understanding of the impact of HIV and HIV treatments on the body, brain, & emotional/spiritual self.

- PHAs will possess practical tools and important skills to implement lifestyle changes in a holistic manner.

- Potential to lead to improved health outcomes.
Expected Outcomes...

“Living well with HIV”

- The knowledge obtained from the workshops will translate into efforts to reduce negative impacts on health and well-being.

- Participants will share the tools/strategies from the workshops with the larger Montreal community, which will in turn improve health outcomes for those who did not participate in the workshops.