(S104) EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF NINTENDO WII TO PROMOTE EXERCISE IN PEOPLE WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS
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Background: The benefits of regular exercise are well established among people with mild-to-moderate symptoms of multiple sclerosis (MS). However, the population with MS is considered extremely inactive. Innovative strategies that promote routine exercises are needed for people with MS. One such innovative strategy may be the use of interactive video game technology. Objectives: To evaluate whether providing access to the video game Nintendo Wii Fit promotes routine exercise, and by extension increases quality of life and fitness among people with MS. Methods: A repeated-measures time-series design was conducted with 30 people who had a physician-confirmed diagnosis of relapsing-remitting MS. The Physical Activity and Disability Survey, 36-item Short Form Health Status Survey (SF-36), Modified Fatigue Impact Scale, and Barrier Self-Efficacy Scale were administered six times over the course of the 19-week study. To establish a baseline control period, questionnaires were administered three times at 2-week intervals before participants had access to Wii Fit. After participants had access to Wii Fit, questionnaires were administered an additional three times at 6-week intervals to compare scores with the baseline control period. Semi-structured interviews were conducted before and after access to Wii Fit. Physical assessments were also conducted twice before participants had access to Wii Fit and once 6 weeks after they had access to Wii Fit. Physical assessments consisted of validated tests of strength, balance, and aerobic endurance. Results: Data collection and analyses will be completed in April 2010. Preliminary results indicate that a home exercise program using Nintendo Wii Fit was well tolerated, and very few adverse events were reported. Preliminary qualitative analyses indicate that participants enjoyed using Wii Fit to engage in exercise and reported improvements in balance and mobility as well as a decrease in fatigue. Conclusions: Providing access to Nintendo Wii Fit may be a potential strategy to promote exercise in people with MS.

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