Uptake to a community based chronic illness rehabilitation programme (CBCIR): Is there a gender disparity?

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Background: Multi-morbidity and chronic conditions pose a threat to population health. Despite known benefits of rehabilitation using structured exercise, uptake to such programmes remains sub-optimal. The aim of this study is to identify the psychosocial and health-related fitness correlates of uptake to a CBCIR in men and women, with the secondary aim of identifying the rate of uptake. Methods: Participants referred to a CBCIR via GPs and hospitals completed an induction process. This introduced them to the CBCIR programme and got them to complete a multi-section questionnaire (including instruments on physical activity, exercise self-efficacy, intentions for exercise, and perceived family/friend social support) and complete a battery of physical health measures (including the Incremental shuttle walk test (ISWT), a lower body strength test and body mass index (BMI)). Post-induction participants who attended an exercise class were classified as ‘Uptakers’, whilst those who never came back were classified as ‘Non-Uptakers’. Class attendance was objectively monitored by the researchers. Data were analysed using SPSS, and are presented using means, standard deviations and proportions, group differences are examined via t-tests and logistic regression was used to predict uptake. Results: A total of 441 participants (56% male; average age 64.3 ±12 years) completed induction measures. Overall, 77% were identified as Uptakers (81% female, 74% male, p=0.068, 2-sided). Among men, Uptakers reported more days of 30 mins moderate to vigorous physical activity (t(111) = -2.499, p