



ENHANCING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS IN A GROUP PAIN MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

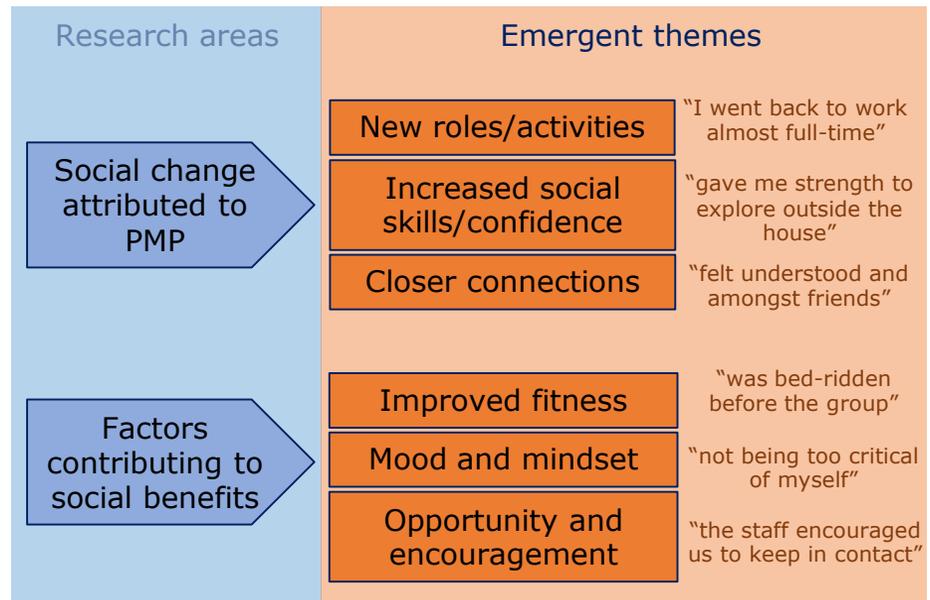
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EASTERN HEALTH AMBULATORY PAIN MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Aim
Allied health led group Pain Management Programs (PMPs) represent best practice treatment of persistent pain. **Social benefits** to participants completing PMPs are common, however research is sparse. Recent completers of a 48 hour (over 8 weeks) PMP were sampled to identify:

1. Changes experienced in social networks;
2. Factors contributing to social benefits;
3. Helpful social support structures/activities;
4. How allied health professionals can best facilitate lasting social benefit.

Method
Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with 24 recent completers of an 8 week public health PMP (67% female, aged 21-75y.o.). Research aims were addressed by qualitative (open ended questions) and quantitative (quality and satisfaction with social networks) measures. Qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis.

Results
Measures of satisfaction and quality of current social networks were generally high, and reported improvements in social functioning due to PMP involvement were common.



Significance of findings to allied health
The current findings can inform practices in a wide range of allied health led group rehabilitation programs - in an effort to enhance participants' social functioning, a much overlooked health outcome. Program resources and guideline documents resulting from this research can be shared with delegates on request (details below).