

# AFHTO 2012 Conference

Seniors Serving Seniors:  
Using Focus Groups To Inform Programming

Taddle Creek Family Health Team

Pauline Pariser, MD

Raymond Chong, MSW

Toronto, Ontario



# Acknowledgments

In the spirit of “Nothing About Me Without Me” we would like to thank our focus group:

Beverly Abosh

Max Beck

Ellis Betensky

Wendy Campbell-Such

Cheryl Chanter

Ruth Genefke

Jerold Hodge

Francine Volker



The same principle applies to today's presentation:

Developed in collaboration with:

Wendy Campbell Such & Jerold Hodge



# Objectives

By the completion of this workshop you should be able to:

- Describe the process of consulting patients to inform programming
- Apply basic principles in developing focus groups
- Develop an approach to implementing a seniors' seminar series



# Why focus on Seniors?

- The evidence
- The Demographic
- The Opportunity



# The Evidence

Planning for retiring or rewiring facilitates quality of life decision-making rather than just thinking about it

Health Retirement Study: “A longitudinal study of health, retirement & Aging.”  
National Institute Of Aging. USA >1600 papers



# The Demographic

Proportion of population over 65 will shortly exceed that under 15. Statistics Canada.

Patients over 65 account for 84% of hospital and homecare costs in Ontario

Aging demographic: Patients and Primary Care Providers – Implications of this cohort aging together

- ◆ TCFHT: 25 % population >55  
9 practices >20 yr.



# The Opportunity

At Taddle Creek commitment to aligning our programming with patient needs and priorities

Key objective of TCFHT Strategic Plan:  
September 2010

Key influence: “So you’re going to live a long time. Are you ready?” Lynne Greene



# Opportunity

“You have to find an engine for change. And that’s what collaborative work does. Whatever we do together will make us different.”

Philip Glass, Composer



# The value of focus groups to inform programming

Participatory design processes:

- Investigated a range of initiatives using focus groups to assess impact on issues such as health guidelines, cardiac failure protocols among low literacy populations, stroke prevention, asthma care, seniors' programming
- Overall conclusion: participation in structured interventions such as focus groups, one –on-one interviews produces better usage of tools, enhanced patient satisfaction and improved health outcomes
- Caveat: a mixed set of interventions including focus groups, personal interviews and mailed surveys delivers more comprehensive information re: qualitative design and planning for larger populations



# Value for patients

“I believe it to be relatively rare for doctors to ask patient advice about their general practices in managing health issues in their offices. To do so for seniors it is perhaps even less common for a litany of reasons. The Taddle Creek practice has always made me feel that I am in charge of my health and that you (his MD) were my aid and consultant. For that approach I have always been grateful. The Senior’s Focus Group underscores this approach by making me a part of the process, not just an output of it. It says to me that some of the answers can come from patients, a respectful and, I think, a wise position to take.” Jerold Hodge



## We Ask You:

Would this be relevant for you in your community?

Are patients informing any of your programming for your FHT?



# The Process

## Step 1:

Survey to assess patient perception of education and treatment groups available at TCFHT.

Design: 2 page questionnaire requesting 7 point evaluation of current groups

Distribution: All 6 offices during a 2 month interval  
Oct.- Nov. 2010

Outcome: 188 responses representing all ages and stages



# The Process

Step 2:

Identification of focus group participants

Survey question asked the following:

“Would you like to be part of an in-person focus group being planned to discuss Taddle Creek Family Health Team’s programs and services?”

Results: 33 respondents or 17.5 % said yes

Of these 14 were 60 and older

From the 14, 12 volunteered, 9 showed up to the first focus group, 8 were invited back.



# The Process

Step 3:

Planning focus group

Clinical meeting: Speaker –Lynne Greene, author who had interviewed high-functioning retirees and compiled factors associated with successful aging

Format: MD and MSW met to review questions, structure and plan co-facilitation.

Participants to answer and discuss questions that related to seniors' programming and rank topic suggestions

Questions formulated based on culling the literature and suggestions from Lynne Greene

Time: 10-12 with light lunch provided



# First Focus Group: 9 attendees

Who volunteered?

Self-selecting group, primarily middle-class made up of 3 men, 6 women from 6 of the 14 medical practices, age range 63-76

Retirement status: 3 fully retired, 2 working full time, 4 working part-time

Occupations: 2 secretaries, 2 consultants, 2 social workers, 1 school principal, 1 consultant, 1 physicist

Health status: All in average to above average health. Majority physically active engaged in long-distance walking, tennis and swimming.

# Question 1: Rank topics according to importance (18 ranked)

4. Sleep hygiene
5. Improving social network
6. Meds and Pain Control
7. Finances
8. Housing
9. Fall prevention
10. Travel Safety
11. Networking
12. Self-advocacy
- 13 & 14. Power of Attorney for Care and Finance
15. Computer usage and technology
16. Grief
17. Accessing community resources
18. Caregiver for spouse

## Question 2: Describe concrete wishes for the future

- Responses tend to correlate with the top 8 categories:
  - Remaining active with good mobility (6)
  - Financially secure (4)
  - Mentally alert mind, keep memory (7)
  - Secure housing (2)



Question 3: Imagine you went to a group on aging well – What is one topic you would tell your friends about?

- Being role model for younger people – how to make getting older more attractive
- Confronting aging from within and without
- Exploring range of diverse activities /exercise, health promoting activity
- Keeping sense of humor and keep going
- Understand and acknowledge physical and mental limitations.

## Question 4: What makes aging a challenge?

- Loss: people you love, drivers' license, mental faculties
- Lack of opportunity such as retraining, not being asked for advice, not in thick of things
- Fall prevention
- Balancing act with next generation – staying active and not becoming a burden, fear of children “treating us as children.”



## Question 5: Are there things you did when younger that have benefitted your life today?

- Activity: Competitive sports, maintaining body image
- Friendships: maintaining and keeping good friends
- Nutrition – eating properly
- Keeping mind active – diverse experiences, social conscience, wisdom you develop over time
- Health – preventative approach, avoiding MDs, not being preoccupied with health



## Question 6: What advice do you wish someone had given you about being 55+?

- Finances: saving, planning, financial literacy
- Social network: becoming more involved in social activities
- Family roots: understanding and preserving your heritage
- Health: Learning how to keep well including complementary medicine



## Questions 7&8: What would make a group impossible to miss and what does a good leader offer?

- Hot topic
- Interest in a series of topics
- Great fellow participants with whom one can connect
- A proactive, inspirational leader who would bring out the contributions of all participants

# Challenge

Group dynamics: always key

Process needs to be inclusive and at the same time well-moderated so that all members have equal opportunity to participate

Require skilled facilitator to ensure safety and support smooth process

First focus group – one member tended to dominate and by mutual agreement was not invited back.



## General Recommendations from group

- Would like to stay connected to TCFHT via newsletter, Web site, continued consultation
- Suggested wellness survey to be administered at CPX from 40 yr. on
- Interested in a series of topics to start
- Interest in ongoing group

# 1. Cognitive/Memory Maintenance

Copyright 2002 by Randy Glasbergen.  
[www.glasbergen.com](http://www.glasbergen.com)



**"I'd like to take Ginkgo to improve my memory,  
but I'm still trying to forget the Disco years."**

## 2. Physical Activity – Staying Fit



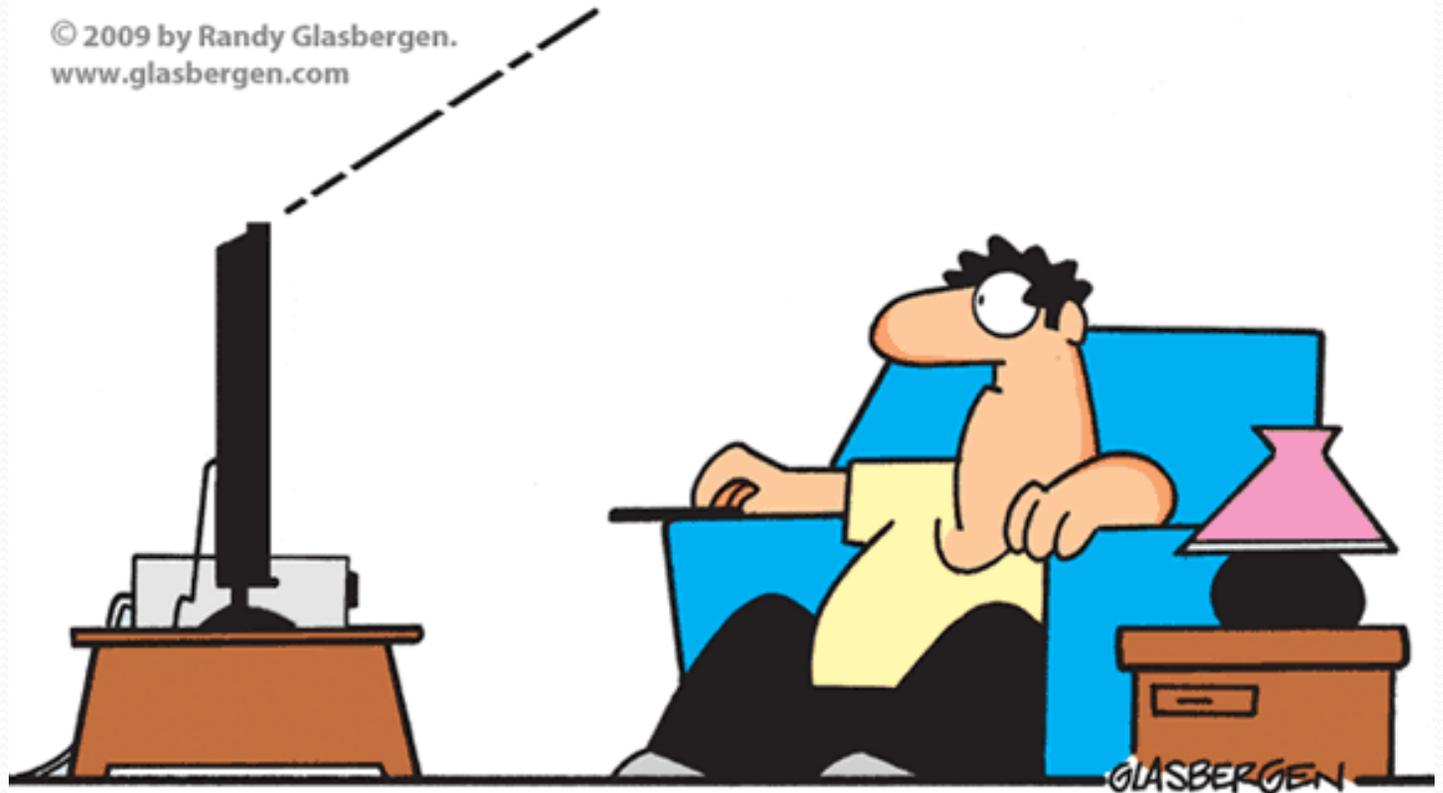
**“It’s not a rash, it’s moss. You need to start being more active than a tree.”**

# 3. Nutrition



# 4. Medications and Pain Control

© 2009 by Randy Glasbergen.  
www.glasbergen.com



**"This program is brought to you by pills! Red pills, blue pills,  
green pills, purple pills, pink pills! Pills, pills, and more pills!  
Ask your doctor if pills are right for you!"**



## We ask you:

Would some of these questions resonate with seniors living in your community?

Any key questions missing?

Comments re: focus group experience from Wendy and Jerry



# Senior's Initiative:

## Second Patient Focus Group

- Purpose of Second Focus Group:
  - To provide Participants with the results of the First Focus Group and to inform Participants of the proposed programming based on those results – provided minutes and ensured our perceptions were aligned
  - To solicit suggestions from Participants including specific topics-of-interest, logistical considerations, etc.
  - To recruit potential volunteers to help implement the new Senior's Initiative Program.



# Senior's Initiative:

## Second Patient Focus Group

- Outcome of the Second Focus Group:
  - All agreed on the proposed programming of having a series of educational seminars with Guest/Expert Speakers, and to begin with having 3-4 seminars as a pilot
  - All agreed on the identified top 4 topics-of-interest, which include:
    1. Medication, 2. Nutrition, 3. Memory Preservation, and 4. Physical Fitness/Mobility



# Senior's Initiative: Second Patient Focus Group

- Outcome of the Second Focus Group:
  - Thorough discussions on the specific details and subtopics for each of the 4 topics-of-interest
  - Identified potential suitable Guest/Expert Speakers for each topic



# Senior's Initiative: Second Patient Focus Group

- Outcome of the Second Focus Group:
  - Obtained feedback and suggestions regarding logistics and other considerations such as:
    - Preferences in timing/scheduling
    - General run-down and components of each session
    - Consensus to extend programming to Patient age 60+



# Implementation Plan

- Offer series approximately q3 monthly, starting in the spring of 2012.
- Start with resources we could more easily engage
- Meet with speakers to plan seminars that spoke to needs/priorities identified by focus group – list of questions forwarded to speakers
- Build in evaluation component



# Seminar Series

- Considerations include:
  - Marketing the seminar
  - Physical space that can comfortably hold 30-40 participants
  - Identifying expert team resources to plan and deliver seminar
  - Honorarium if using external experts
  - Snacks
  - Handouts
  - Engaging focus group volunteers in set-up
  - Having slide-deck available on web site

# Seminar Series: Marketing

*Taddle Creek*  
Family Health Team

**Taddle Creek Family Health Team**

*presents:*  
Our new

**SENIOR'S INITIATIVE**

Four Educational Workshops on topics of most interest  
to our senior Patients (60+), including:

- ❖ **MEDICATION** (Spring, 2012)
- ❖ **MEMORY PRESERVATION** (Summer, 2012)
- ❖ **NUTRITION** (Fall, 2012)
- ❖ **PHYSICAL FITNESS & MOBILITY** (Winter, 2012)

- SENIOR'S INITIATIVE -  
Educational Workshop on:

# MEDICATION & AGING

For all those who are 60+, have you ever wondered about:

- Changes in our body metabolism as we age?
- Common drug interactions?
- What medications can help prevent illnesses common to the elderly population?
- Strategies and useful tips in administering medication?
- How to be an intelligent consumer of drugs and medication?
- Or if you have any other medication-related questions...?

Here is your chance to get your questions answered by our professional Pharmacist - Dora Chan, and our Lead Physician - Dr. Pauline Pariser

✚ **Date: Thursday, March 22, 2012**

✚ **Time: 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon**

✚ **Location: 790 Bay St., Suite 306**  
(Bay & College St.)

✚ Light Refreshments provided

✚ **R.S.V.P. Deadline: March 15, 2012**

**FIRST COME, FIRST SERVE!**



*Calling All Seniors!*

To **R.S.V.P.** or for more information, please contact our Social Worker, Raymond Chong at 416-260-1315 x 308

- SENIOR'S INITIATIVE -  
Educational Workshop on:

# Memory Preservation

**For all those who are 60+, have you ever wondered about:**

- The connection between memory and aging?
- What are the 'natural' changes in memory as we age?
- Strategies to enhance and preserve our memory?
- Or if you have any other memory-related questions...?

**Here is your chance to get your questions answered by  
Dr. Sharon Cohen, Director of Toronto Memory Program**

- ✚ **Date:** Thursday, June 28, 2012
- ✚ **Time:** 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon
- ✚ **Location:** 790 Bay St., Suite 508  
(Bay & College St.)
- ✚ Light Refreshments provided
- ✚ **R.S.V.P. Deadline: June 21, 2012**  
**FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED!**



To **R.S.V.P.** or for more information, please contact our  
Social Worker, Raymond Chong, at 416-260-1315 x 308

- SENIOR'S INITIATIVE -  
Educational Workshop on:  
**Nutrition & Aging**

**For all those who are 60+, have you ever wondered about:**

- Your nutrition needs as you age?
- What you can do to improve your eating habits to age successfully?
- How to read food labels and make smart food choices?
- Any other nutrition-related questions...?

**Presented by our Registered Dietitians,  
Megan Omstead and Shivon Sanduja**

✚ **Date: Thursday, August 30, 2012**  
✚ **Time: 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon**  
✚ **Location: 790 Bay St., Suite 508**  
(Bay & College St.)  
✚ Light Refreshments provided  
**FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED!**



To **R.S.V.P.** or for more information, please contact our  
Social Worker, Raymond Chong, at 416-260-1315 x 308



# **MEDICATION AND AGING**

**Presented by:**

**Dr. Pauline Pariser, Lead Physician**

**Dora Chan, Taddle Creek Pharmacist**

## PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- Seniors and Medications
- Safety Tips
- Be an “Intelligent Reader”
- Preventative Medicine
- Questions

Topics chosen based on  
feedback from Focus  
Group



## Seniors & Medications

- Metabolism Basics
- Why risk increases with age

## Safety Tips

- The 4 “Drug Commandments”
- Taking Charge of Your Medications

## Be an “Intelligent Reader”

- Tips for being an intelligent on-line reader
- Credible websites
- Tips for reading medical studies



## Preventative Medicine

- Focus on dementia, cancer, heart disease & diabetes
- Some medications, but primarily lifestyle

## Questions

- Many collected prior to presentation



# Memory preservation and Aging

Dr. Sharon Cohen  
Toronto Memory Program  
Taddle Creek Family Health Team  
June 28, 2012



# Seminar Objectives

- To provide insight into the following:
  - What is memory? How does it work?
  - How does memory change with normal aging?
  - What is the difference between forgetfulness and Alzheimer's disease?
  - What can we do to preserve memory?
  - What are the options for treating diseases such as Alzheimer's disease?



# Memory and Aging: The good news

- Procedural memory remains strong
- Semantic memory remains strong
- Insight, judgment, planning and decision-making remain strong
- Other cognitive functions improve with age
- Functional autonomy remains intact

S. Cohen, Toronto Memory Program



## Memory and Aging: Less Good News

- Certain aspects of memory decline with age
- Decline is evident after age 30
- Speed of response declines
- Incidental learning declines
- Source memory declines

S.Cohen, Toronto Memory Program



## Is there a brain healthy lifestyle?

- Strong evidence that the following factors can influence memory:
  - Physical exercise
  - Mental exercise
  - Nutrition
  - Restorative sleep
  - Stress management

The image features a photograph of a tipped-over orange plastic container, a white plastic lid, and a cluster of green apples and oranges. The text "Nutrition and Aging" is overlaid in blue on the photograph.

# Nutrition and Aging

- Megan Omstead RD CDE and Shivon Sanduja RD



# Nutrition and Aging Agenda

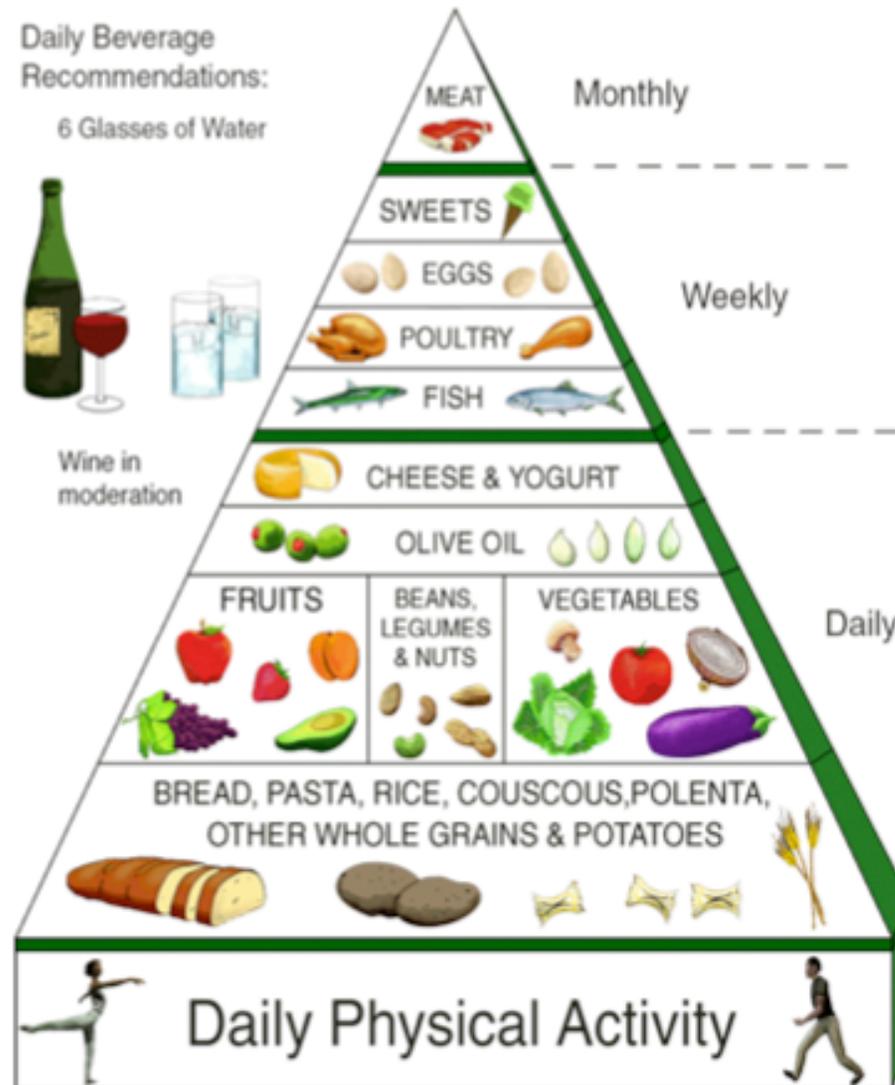
- Nutrition needs for healthy aging
- Chronic disease prevention
- Mediterranean Diet
- Nutritional supplements
- Label Reading
- Meal Planning
- Questions and Answers



# The Mediterranean Diet

- Lifestyle vs. 'diet'
- Associated with improved memory, reduced risk of mild cognitive impairment and dementia (48% lower risk)
- Lowered levels of inflammatory markers
- 70% reduction in mortality in people who had already had heart attack

# The Mediterranean Diet



# Nutrition and Aging

## Take Home Messages

1. Your nutrition needs change as you age
2. Dietary changes can help to prevent or manage chronic diseases
3. The Mediterranean Diet is rich in antioxidants, fiber and healthy fats to improve your health
4. The plate model is a tool to manage portions, plan meals and enjoy a balanced diet
5. Reading labels can help you make healthy food choices





## Discussion:

Are there speakers/ experts you could identify from your FHT and/or community?

What enablers and barriers currently exist?

Comments from Wendy and Jerry:

Re: experience of seminar series

How series related to focus group



# Senior's Initiative: Evaluation

- Extremely well attended:
  - All 3 Seminars fully seated to maximum room capacity
- Extremely well received (based on Evaluation Questionnaire distributed at the end of each Seminar):
  - For example, an average of all 3 Seminars indicates:
    - 86.5% of respondents said they would rate the workshop overall as Excellent
    - 84.7% of respondents said the information presented was Very Much able to answer their questions



# Senior's Initiative: Evaluation

- Extremely well received (based on Evaluation Questionnaire distributed at the end of each Seminar):
  - 86.3% were Very Much satisfied with the amount of information presented
  - 95.7% found the information Very Much presented in ways that engaged interest
  - 97.8% found the presenter Very Much able to communicate and share information in a helpful manner.
  - 93.0% said they would Very Much recommend this workshop to others



# Senior's Initiative: Evaluation

- Some comments from our Participants:
  - “Friendly atmosphere, excellent information, relevant method of presenting information. The doctor’s introduction to why [having these] workshops and her fall participation is great.”
  - “Very clear presentation. Open to questions from participants – visual very helpful and clear. Very well organized in every aspect by Team.”
  - “The level of material, how it matched the audience...”
  - “I would be interested in joining and volunteering on the panel group and I know that I would be able to contribute something for people of colour. Very interesting and informative. Thank you.”



# Senior's Initiative: Evaluation and Beyond:

- Responses from the Evaluation Questionnaires also helped identify other potential topics-of-interest for future Seminars, some of which include:
  - “Homes: physical security devices for the home as you age, stairs, bath, mobility devices, alarm strategies, the whole enchilada on retirement homes vs staying put, access, waiting periods, cost, quality, help in your home”
  - “Sensory issues, vision and hearing, improving hearing beyond hearing aids”
  - “Stress management”
  - “Dealing with loss”



# Senior's Initiative: Evaluation and Beyond:

- A third Patient Focus Group will be conducted upon the completion of the 4<sup>th</sup> Seminar:
  - To evaluate the 'Pilot' project of the series of 4 educational seminars
  - To discuss the further development of the Senior's Initiative and other future programming for our senior Patients at TCFHT
  - Moving forward: Build in a pre and post evaluation component to assess health outcomes



# Senior's Initiative:

- Benefits include:
  - Partnering with patients to create responsive programming, newsletter for patients
  - Up-to-date pragmatic information to enhance healthy aging
  - Links to relevant resources
  - Overall engagement with delivery of care
  - Peer support – social connections made as a consequence of focus group and attendance at seminars
  - Examples of participation in other healthy aging initiatives



# Senior's Initiative: Limitations

- First round has appealed to well-educated, more sophisticated group of health care consumers – however, those attending seminar would like to join focus group to expand programming to more marginalized groups
- Seminar series assumes a certain level of health literacy
- Addressing issues of isolation, financial and housing concerns will require more in-depth programming
- Did not reach those most in need – more elderly, infirm
- Small numbers not representative of age group



## We ask you:

- Any experience with focus groups in your settings?
- Could you see offering this approach?
- Any suggestions for us as we move forward?



## Selected references on the role of planning for retirement

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**Development and pilot testing of a disease management program for low literacy patients with heart failure.**

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## In conclusion:

- Well worth doing and has provided a model for informing future programming at Taddle Creek
- From start to finish has taken close to 2 years to implement focus groups, develop and implement series
- QUESTIONS????
- For further information please contact:
  - [ppariser@tcfht.on.ca](mailto:ppariser@tcfht.on.ca)
  - [rchong@tcfht.on.ca](mailto:rchong@tcfht.on.ca)