ABSTRACT

The population is aging and chronic conditions, which are major causes of pain and mobility limitations, are on the rise, however, current access to physiotherapy is difficult. Knowledge on managing disability is substantial, but methods to translate this knowledge into action are lacking. This project is designed to test a novel method of promoting function in vulnerable seniors and simultaneously develop awareness in the new generation of physiotherapists that they can have a proactive role in health promotion. We are proposing a pilot project targeting both students and patients. The research questions are (1) for a senior population at risk for physical deterioration, to what the extent is a personalized mentoring approach to optimizing function and preventing disability through developing self-management skills more effective in improving outcomes than the provision of written material covering the same general content? (2) Does a mentoring experience with vulnerable seniors through development and teaching of a self-management program (comprised of education and support) produce meaningful positive changes in future clinicians’ knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards modes of delivering physiotherapy services and promoting self-management in Canadian seniors? A randomized trial design will be piloted. A sample of 200 seniors recently discharged from the adult, general, hospital sites of the MUHC will be contacted for a needs assessment. From this pool, we anticipate 100 will be eligible and 60 will be randomized, 30 to the mentor intervention and 30 to the control. The main outcome is a standardized response ratio estimated across all persons and measures.