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Older adults recruited for study to assess ways of preserving mobility

BY JENNIFER WELSH

What many senior citizens fear most — more than disease — is losing their independence because they can no longer move around easily.

Researchers at the [Stanford University School of Medicine](#) are recruiting older adults to determine the effectiveness of two senior lifestyle programs aimed at preserving participants' mobility and independence.

The Lifestyle Interventions and Independence for Elders study, a six-year multicenter trial coordinated by the University of Florida, is funded by the National Institute on Aging. Stanford is one of eight field sites, having received \$6.5 million to conduct the study in the San Francisco Bay area.

[Abby King](#), PhD, principal investigator of the Stanford site, said her team will be recruiting 200 sedentary, older adults who will be randomly assigned to one of two health programs.

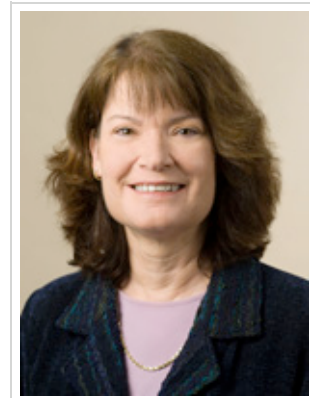
The first is a “successful aging” program of interactive workshops on topics such as aging and wellness, disease prevention and treatment, nutrition and stress management. Participants in the second program will engage in moderate-intensity exercise including fitness, strength, flexibility and balance training.

“Both programs are safe, informative and enjoyable for people of this age group,” said King, professor of health research and policy and of medicine at the [Stanford Prevention Research Center](#). Stanford was also part of a pilot study of the two programs, published in 2006, that provided encouraging results but was not large enough to prove their effectiveness.

King said she believes the results of this study will shed light on “a wide range of outcomes, both in the health area and relating to day-to-day function and quality of life, including areas such as cognitive function and psychological benefits.”

Eligible individuals who enroll in the study will participate for up to four years, during which time both groups will have regular contact with trained health staff from Stanford. Participants also will receive health and medical screening exams at no cost.

King's team is recruiting adults between the ages of 70 and 89 who are experiencing some difficulty with daily activities including walking, getting out of chairs and climbing stairs. Applicants should not be involved in regular physical activity and should live in the greater San Francisco Bay area.



Abby King

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Recruitment for the study will begin in early 2010. For more information about the study call (650) 723-9530 or toll-free at (877) 232-5680, e-mail healthyaging@stanford.edu or visit the Healthy Aging Studies Web site at <http://healthyaging.stanford.edu/>.

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