



Consumer and Community
Involvement Program



WAHTN

Western Australian Health Translation Network

EXPLORING CHANGES TO COGNITIVE FUNCTION AND MOVEMENTS WITH HEALTHY AGEING

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION REPORT



Prepared By

Caroline Jones
Ann-Maree Vallence
Laura Farkas

June
2024

MU Murdoch
University

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgement of Country

The WAHTN CCIP Program acknowledges the Aboriginal people of the many traditional lands and language groups of Western Australia. We acknowledge the wisdom of Aboriginal Elders both past and present and pay respect to Aboriginal communities of today.

Thank you to all of the consumers and community members who attended the online Community Conversation. We couldn't have done this without any of you.

We'd also like to acknowledge the team from the University of Western Australia and the Consumer and Community Involvement Program (CCIP Program) support team for their hard work in successfully delivering the Community Conversation. Our heartfelt thanks.

Acknowledgement of Lived Experience

We acknowledge the importance and expertise of the lived experience voice of health consumers and carers. We recognise their involvement in making a difference in supporting health research and impacting the health and wellbeing of our communities.



WHAT IS THE CONSUMER AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM?



The Consumer and Community Involvement Program (CCIProgram) supports consumer and community involvement across the Western Australian Health Translation Network (WAHTN) partner organisations.

CCIProgram's **Vision** is to improve lives by ensuring the community's voice is heard and understood in health research

CCIProgram's **Mission** is enabling consumer and community involvement in health research by supporting and connecting community with researchers, partners and policy makers.

In order to achieve CCIProgram's Vision we:

- Are inclusive
- Trust, respect, support and value each other and those we work with
- Work as a team
- Are relevant and sustainable so as to make a difference.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION?

A Community Conversation is an event using an abridged version of the Word Café Method[1] and allows for the facilitation of informal, open conversations around a specific topic of importance. This method allows researchers to informally obtain a range of communal ideas from a group of people with lived experience around a particular topic specified prior to the event.[2],[3] Additionally, a Community Conversation provides an opportunity for attendees to reflect upon their own relevant experiences and contribute in meaningful discussions within a safe and comfortable space.



[1] Brown, J., & Isaacs, D. (2005). *The World Café : Shaping our futures through conversations that matter*. Barrett-Koehler

[2] Chieh-Ling Yang, Delphine Labbé, Brodie M. Sakakibara, Janneke Vissers & Marie-Louise Bird (2022) World Café- a community conversation: a Canadian perspective on stroke survivors needs for community integration, *Topics in Stroke Rehabilitation*, 29:5, 392-400.

[3] Carter, E. W., Schutz, M. A., Gajjar, S. A., Maves, E. A., Bumble, J. L., & McMillan, E. D. (2021). Using Community Conversations to Inform Transition Education in Rural Communities. *The Journal of Special Education*, 55(3), 131-142.

PROMOTION

Murdoch University worked closely with the CCIP program to recruit healthy older adults to hear their experiences with changes in thinking, memory and decision-making and movements with age. We shared promotional communications across multiple channels.

Flyers and social media posts (Facebook and Instagram) were posted and circulated around relevant networks, including consumer and/or related health service provider networks and community groups.



COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

**DO YOU FEEL MORE CAUTIOUS OR UNSTEADY WHEN MOVING AROUND?
HAVE YOU NOTICED YOU'RE FORGETTING THINGS?**

Many of us experience changes in our movement and cognitive function as we get older. Healthy ageing researchers aim to understand what causes these changes to occur in the brain, as well as develop interventions to prevent or slow these changes to happen.

This will be a group event, including yourself and other healthy older adults. We will ask you questions about your experiences with healthy ageing and your thoughts around interventions that might improve movement and cognitive function in older adults.

Inclusion criteria
60 years and older
Ambulant

Exclusion criteria
Currently experiencing a major acute or chronic illness that affects movement and/or cognitive function (e.g., viral infection, break/fracture/strain, concussion, mild cognitive impairment, Parkinson's disease).

**A \$75 honorarium is offered to attendees.
Light refreshments will be provided.**

WHEN: Wednesday 29th May 2024
TIME: 6pm - 8pm
WHERE: Murdoch University
Boola Katitjin, Rm 360.3.032

Register your interest



<https://bit.ly/3uvD44a>



BACKGROUND

The population above 65 years of age is growing in Australia. Many older Australians experience physical and cognitive impairments affecting their well-being and independence. Identifying the causes of age-related decline in function and developing interventions to moderate age-related decline in function is critical. A necessary and important first step in this research is to understand the core concerns of older adults in the local community.

As individuals age, they experience declines in their function, which influences their everyday experiences and overall well-being. It is important to understand the significance of these functional changes to older adults and to identify what matters most to them as they age so that research can focus on these factors. The research is based on the need to understand the core concerns of older adults regarding ageing to guide future research aimed at advancing knowledge of age-related changes in movement and cognitive function. While recent research has investigated older adults' views on healthy ageing, our understanding of the movement and cognitive declines that affect this cohort is lacking.

This project will investigate older adults' perceptions of age-related changes in movement and cognitive function. Aligning research efforts with the priorities and needs of older adults will provide a solid basis for the development of interventions aimed at moderating or even reversing age-related declines in movement and cognitive function.



Movement & Ageing Community Conversation
Wednesday 29 May 2024 – 6pm to 8pm
Murdoch University, Boola Katitjin, 360.3.032

Agenda

5.30pm	Registration, honorarium, consent forms & refreshments	All
6.00pm	Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgement of Country • Welcome to the workshop Introductions	Caroline Jones
6.10pm	Presentation	Ann-Maree Vallence & Belinda Brown
6.20pm	Process of the evening	Caroline Jones
6.25pm	Question 1: Thinking back over the last 5-10 years, what changes have you noticed in your thinking, memory, attention and decision-making? Have these changes affected your day-to-day activities and how? (15 mins)	All
6.50pm	Question 2: Over this same 5-10 years, what changes have you noticed in your walking, balance, fine control of the hands? Have these changes affected your day-to-day activities and how? (15 mins)	All
6.55pm	Question 3: Do you know of or take part in activities or programs that help you to maintain memory, attention and decision-making skills as you get older? 1. What makes it easier or harder to take part in these activities or programs? 2. Which programs or activities do you enjoy accessing or would you like to access? (15 mins)	All
7.10pm	Question 4: Do you know of or take part in activities or programs that help you to maintain movement as you get older? 1. What makes it easier or harder to take part in these activities or programs? 2. Which programs or activities do you enjoy accessing or would you like to access? (15 mins)	All
7.25pm	Table feedback – key themes	All
7.40pm	Next steps and questions	Caroline, Ann- Maree & Belinda
7.55pm	Evaluation	Caroline Jones
8.00pm	Close	

THE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION TEAM



Caroline Jones, CCIP Program

Lead Facilitator

Caroline is the Consumer and Community Involvement Coordinator for Murdoch University and the University of Notre Dame. With early career qualifications in Health Promotion and 20 years' experience working within local government community development, Caroline brings expertise in connecting with community. She has a keen interest in working with aboriginal communities, culturally diverse communities and vulnerable people such as those experiencing homelessness. Caroline will focus on ensuring that people with lived experience are enabled to contribute meaningfully while building the capacity of researchers and research partner institutions.



Kerry Mace, Ingrid Laing and Matt Hands - CCIP Program

Table Facilitators

Thank you to the CCIP Program facilitators for their assistance in facilitating the conversation with the attending community members.

Also, thank you to the Murdoch University scribes: Laura Farkas, Bronwyn Rowe and Aleksandra Miljevic for their assistance in scribing the conversation with the attending community members.

THE HEALTHY AGEING RESEARCH TEAM



A/Prof. Ann-Maree Vallence, School of Psychology Murdoch University

Co-lead researcher

Associate Professor Ann-Maree Vallence Co-Directs the Action and Cognition Research Group in the School of Psychology at Murdoch University. Ann-Maree's research uses neurophysiological and applied behavioural measures to investigate sensorimotor control, learning, and cognitive function in healthy and clinical populations. Ann-Maree's research has been funded by the Australian Research Council (Discovery Early Career Researcher Award, 2019-2023), the National Health and Medical Research Council (Ideas Grant, 2021-2024; Early Career Fellowship, 2015-2018). Ann-Maree was the Vice President for the Australasian Brain Stimulation Society (2018-2021) and was the Western Australian State Representative for the Australasian Neuroscience Society (2018-2019). In 2018, Ann-Maree was awarded a WA Young Tall Poppy Science Award.

Ann-Maree was awarded her PhD from the University of Western Australia, and subsequently worked as a University Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Neuromotor Plasticity and Development Group at the University of Adelaide, and a Visiting Research Fellow in the Sobell Department of Motor Neuroscience and Movement Disorders at University College London. In 2015, Ann-Maree moved to Murdoch University to establish her human neurophysiology laboratory.



A/Prof. Belinda Brown, Centre of Healthy Ageing, Murdoch University

Co-lead researcher

A/Prof Belinda Brown is the Cognition Stream Leader of the Centre for Healthy Ageing at Murdoch University. Belinda's expertise lies in examining the role of lifestyle in maintaining a healthy brain throughout ageing. Her research program applies a multidisciplinary approach to designing observational and intervention studies to understand the ways in which lifestyle factors, specifically physical activity and exercise, protect the brain in older adulthood. The overall message from this body of research to date is that cognitive function, brain volume and dementia-related pathologies are changeable in later life, and exercise is a factor that may contribute to enhancing optimal brain health profiles.

A/Prof Brown has published 73 research papers, and this work has been cited >5000 times. She has received over \$1 million in research funding as lead investigator. In 2019, Belinda's contribution and impact to the field were recognised when she was named Semi-Finalist in the Western Australian Premier's Science Awards and received the Murdoch University Vice Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Research.

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

On Wednesday 29th May 2024, 20 ambulant people aged 60 years and older, 4 members of the Consumer and Community Involvement Program and 4 Murdoch University researchers joined the Community Conversation to discuss changes in their movement and cognitive function as they get older. Healthy ageing researchers aim to understand what causes these changes to occur in the brain, as well as develop interventions to prevent or slow these changes to happen.

The following pages contain the responses and thoughts shared by attendees at the Community Conversation. They are categorised according to the four questions asked to inform the research team regarding people's lived experience with changes in cognitive function and movements.

"... just to keep your mental fitness and alertness, sometimes people say, you know, I know a healthy mind and a healthy body. So you think you you physically fit and mentally fit... "



KEY THEMES OF THE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Subject	Consumer issues/comments
Slowing down	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Having been busy for so long and you're thinking, you know, on your feet the whole time, and then suddenly there wasn't that, issue that I had. And so I sort of slowed, slowed somewhat. You know, and that was a big change for me.”
Forgetfulness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I am a list person at least I wouldn't just remember. Yeah. I live by it. Yeah. Because I think for me, I've lost confidence with just forgetfulness and not remembering. Remembering things..”
Unsteadiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I've always been a walker kind 10 k before work every day. And and in the last ten years, I guess, I was having lots of tripping. Yeah. Just tripping. And I feel hopeless..”
Changes in hand control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I notice change in my hands and I'm finding that I occasionally some days I've tried to sort of think like lack of sleep or anything else. I just haven't had the control of the brush as much as someone or something silly like that. Yeah, well, I'm just not steady, you know, as I used to be. And it drives me crazy”
Volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “...I wanted to keep myself occupied and busy. So I joined the local secondary school, and I do volunteer there. And day a week, two of the necessary. And I find that, stimulating going, visiting people, taking in things and, engaging with them...”
Learning new things	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Well I had did some studies with the geriatrics certificate with Curtin University. It was a year long one and I quite enjoyed it. And I think that, studying any subject is really good for your brain...”
Active Lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “You know I've been doing that and the pool walking as well because something so nice.. We're going to go to the strengthening class on Friday. So, we're just getting into the activities. But we like bike ride every single day, we walk every day. And it's just magical..”
Regular physical activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “...I was at the physiotherapist as well. I'm 65. What exercise told me to do? Well. So he gave me a set of what you call resistance work, which is rubber bands and takes about 30 minutes. So, I do it every morning for last 20 years. So that's, that's that's extremely beneficial for me...”

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION FINDINGS

Question 1:

Thinking back over the last 5 to 10 years, what changes have you noticed in your thinking, memory, attention and decision making? Have these changes affected your day-to-day activities and how?

The participants described their experiences with changes in cognitive functions including thinking, memory, attention and decision making. The most common challenges raised include changes in thinking, attention and decision making and decline in memory.

In changes in thinking, attention and decision-making, slowing down was a general theme that was recognised, especially, in decision making. External factors were also identified such as heat, stress, sleep, pain, caring responsibilities, transition to retirement, hearing problems which can negatively impact thinking, attention and decision making as people age.

For memory decline, short-term memory loss was recognised as the main deteriorating factor by several participants. Forgetfulness especially forgetting names and important events were identified which for some participants also caused a lack of confidence. Useful adaptation strategies such as record keeping, marking calendars, and referring to lists such as shopping lists were a general idea that could help to manage short-term memory difficulties.

A closer look at the most common themes that emerged from responses to this question:

Changes in attention and decision-making:

- "I've noticed slowing down and, and attention and and decision making. That's, that's yeah, a big thing".
- "...it's more difficult than it used to be".

External factors that impact thinking and decision making:

- "I found that if I don't get a good night's sleep, I get a brain fog".
- "There have been many commitments and challenges and husband's health issues have impacted a lot. Decision making".
- "I noticed that if I'm tired, stressed and hurt and I've got a lot of things going on, like I tend to, slow down".

Forgetfulness:

- "Do you think I could, look at the guy for about two minutes and I couldn't think of his name".
- "You know, some issues with remembering names and memory".
- "Someone introduce himself or herself few seconds later, I can't place the name you know I can't remember what it was".

Writing things down:

- "So, you also need to refer to a shopping list, for example, is what I'm going to go shopping for".
- "And I am coordinating things and marking the calendars, appointments, especially doctors and specialists".

Question 2:

Over this same 5 to 10 years, what changes have you noticed in your walking, balance and fine control of hands? Have these changes affected your day-to-day activities and how?

The participants noticed various changes in walking, balance and fine control of the hands which were reported to be deteriorated over the last 5 to 10 years. The most common issues were the decline in walking balance and fine motor skill changes.

The decline in walking ability was a general topic amongst participants including walking slower and walking with caution, especially on uneven grounds. Some participants also reported difficulties in navigating stairs. Loss of balance was also a common theme which caused falling incidents and long recovery time for some of the participants.

Changes in fine motor skills included less strength and less control of the hands. Some participants reported having tremors and arthritis which caused restrictions in picking up items, opening bottles and holding objects. Some others identified issues with vision which impacted the ability to use their hands effectively.

A closer look at the most common themes that emerged from responses to this question:

Walking/Moving with caution:

- "I tripped around 18 months ago and broke my pelvis. So, I am lucky to just walking so if I am slower I'm not worried because, I mean, I don't fall at all with that question".
- "balances. I like to climb up the ladder. I am cautious these days. Used to be quite comfortable climbing up a ladder. You can just have that caution now".
- "It's these last three years, I fell down five times. Yeah. Never before. Just these last three years. So, I mean, I was admitted to Fremantle hospital. Oh, well, they did a scan but they didn't find nothing... But, yeah, it's obvious that, I, I have to walk carefully now. It is worse than before".

Vision affects fine control of hands :

- "Fine control of the hands maybe...I have deteriorated a bit. Oh, okay. You know, I think it's kind of more to do with the eyes".
- "...And with the fine motor? Because I don't, I need glasses and I see things. I don't know how much of that is..".

Changes in fine motor skills:

- "...I have also noticed was, the, actually have fine control of my hands. I've never had good handwriting or anything. I've never had great control. But that has also deteriorated. My writing is now worse than ever..".
- "...I kind of just had a bad strength for hand action. I have to use a special kind of thing for opening packaging. I'm so tired from all that stuff".

Question 3

Do you know of or take part in activities or programs that help you to maintain thinking, memory, attention and decision-making as you get older?

For Question 3, three general themes were identified that could help to maintain thinking, memory, attention and decision-making;

- volunteering,
- learning new things,
- and engaging in mentally stimulating activities and games.

Many participants shared that working/volunteering after retirement could not just give a purpose but could also enhance memory and attention. Having responsibilities made them feel motivated and mentally stimulated.

Learning new things was another common topic that came up during the conversations. Several participants engaged with short and university courses, learning different languages and attend in workshops regularly to maintain their thinking, memory and attention.

Engagement with mentally stimulating activities and games was a general idea to maintain cognitive function and these activities were:

- researching, reading, photography and traveling,
- art activities such as painting, singing and playing on instruments,
- games such as card games, scrabble and sudoku.

A closer look at the most common themes that emerged from responses to this question:

Engage in mentally stimulating activities:

- "...we're talking about the thinking, attention and memory it's all about. It's with my mom. It's. We play card games, we play Scrabble. I do Sudoku just those things...".
- "...I started learning the piano again, you know, and that's like nine years ago and continue continuing now. Yeah. I mean, you know, I'm working through various grades. Oh, I'm going to pick up the recorder again..".

Working/Volunteering:

- "...to keep your memory or your your mental alertness and fitness going. I also helped with lawn bowl coaching for school kids..".
- "...and I do volunteer driving every Wednesday. And I love that I get so much from the clients that I become my employer. And the way in my head to really get a lot out of them...".

Learning new things :

- "...I just had a few days a week, one day a week off, so I could do an aged-care course, because I thought that would be a good way for me to learn. So, no intention of going into it. But just to learn more about...".

Question 4

Do you know of or take part in activities or programs that help you to maintain movement as you get older?

Active lifestyle including regular physical activity/exercise was a common theme that helped to maintain movement amongst participants.

Various physical activities and programs came up during the conversation:

- physical activities: gardening, dancing and walking dogs,
- exercises: lawn bowling, tennis, walking, power walking, jogging, water aerobics, badminton, croquet, bike ride, playing golf, playing pool, swimming, stand up paddle boarding and kayaking.

Several factors were identified that could influence the participation in these physical activities and programs:

- proximity,
- social pressure,
- companionship,
- time,
- motivation/reasons for exercise.

A closer look at the most common themes that emerged from responses to this question:

Regular physical activity/exercise:

- "Well, for me at croquet, just playing in a group. And in a way, you have to try and remember, you know, shots and things like that, but it's movement. Continuous movement. Yeah. So that's important, I think...".
- "...here I had two sessions of water aerobics, one session of Pilates in one session in Tai Chi and walking..".



Factors that influence attending in physical activities:

- "...If anyone else doing anything, I think there's a certain sort of you feel a bit of pressure... I do go to the gym twice a week. So that's more the way to go. But you talked about it and also swimming in the summer and a friend of mine, but everybody got into group activities so much of the day. So it's very much agree with..".
- "...There's an element of confidence too. You know, when you're on your own, you want to go and do this. I found that anybody had to have the confidence to go into a group and say, yeah, I'm here, you know? ...".
- "...Much easier when you've got to friend or partner to do it.."
- "...So I finally got into walking and all that sort of stuff. And that is what motivated me, but I did. Yeah. Ever since I moved in the village. And that's because I have a neighbor that walks with me.."

EVENT SUMMARY

Evaluation and feedback from attendees were collected through the CCIP program following the closing of the Community Conversation. The consensus from all who attended was that the Community Conversation was extremely informative, interactive, and engaging. Attendees were enthusiastic around their involvement with this particular event and commented that they felt their contributions were valued and appreciated. Overall, the event was extremely successful and will allow for the research team to provide informed consumer and community member feedback for further grant opportunities and research priorities.



Appendix

Wednesday 29th May 2024

Evaluation Summary

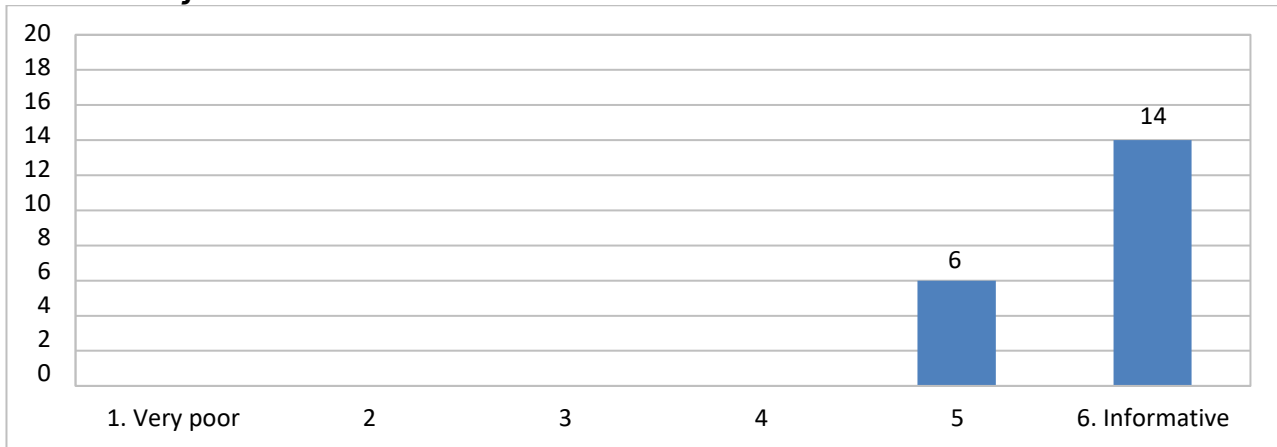
20 Forms completed / 20 attendees

Please tick the responses which best match your view:

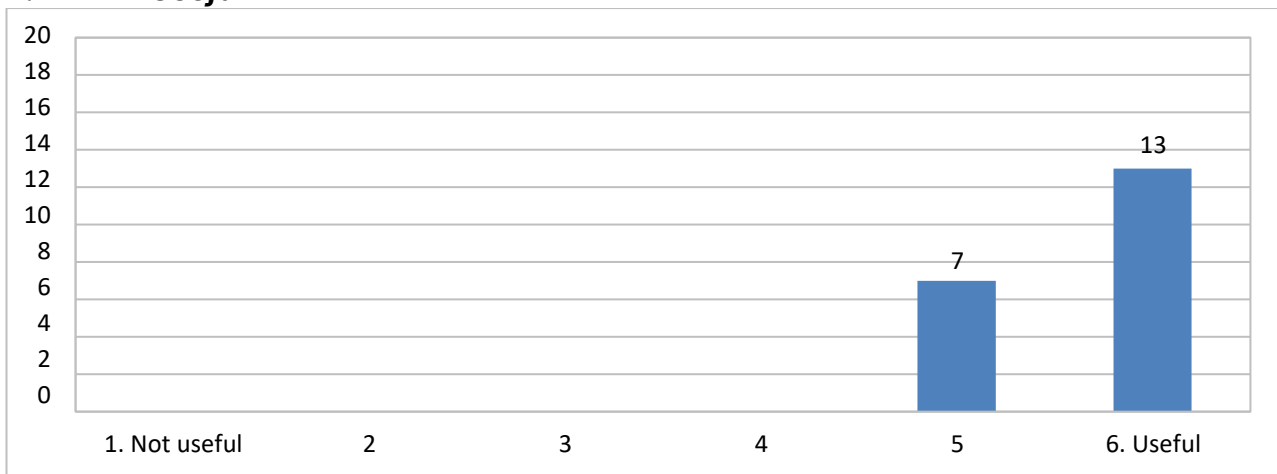
1. The Community Conversation was:



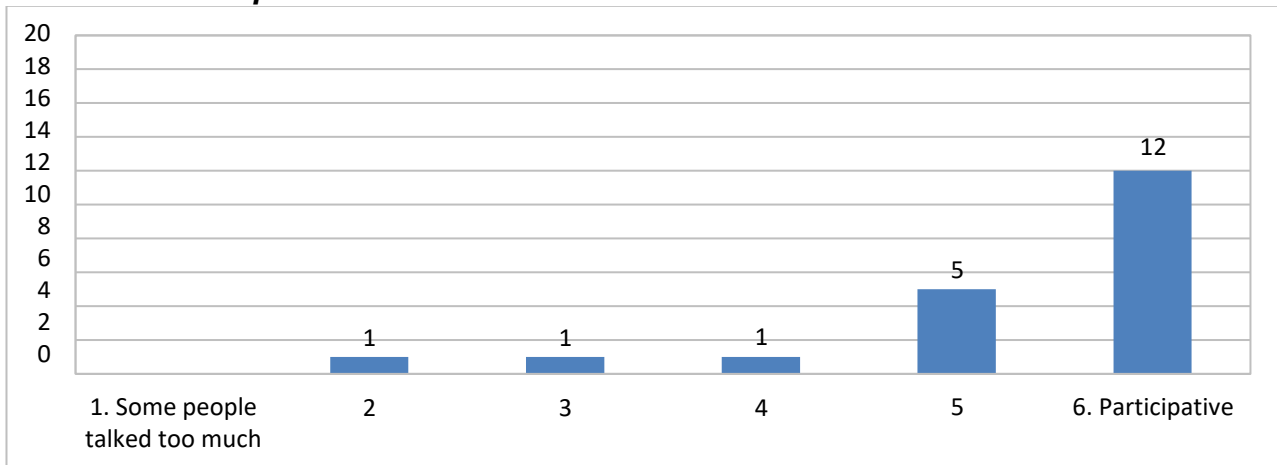
1.1 Informative



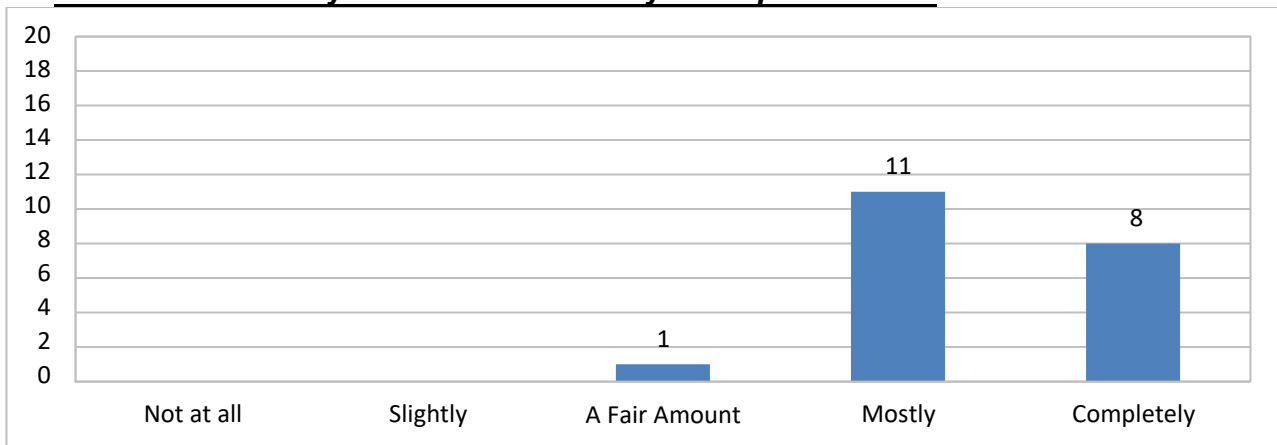
1.2 Useful



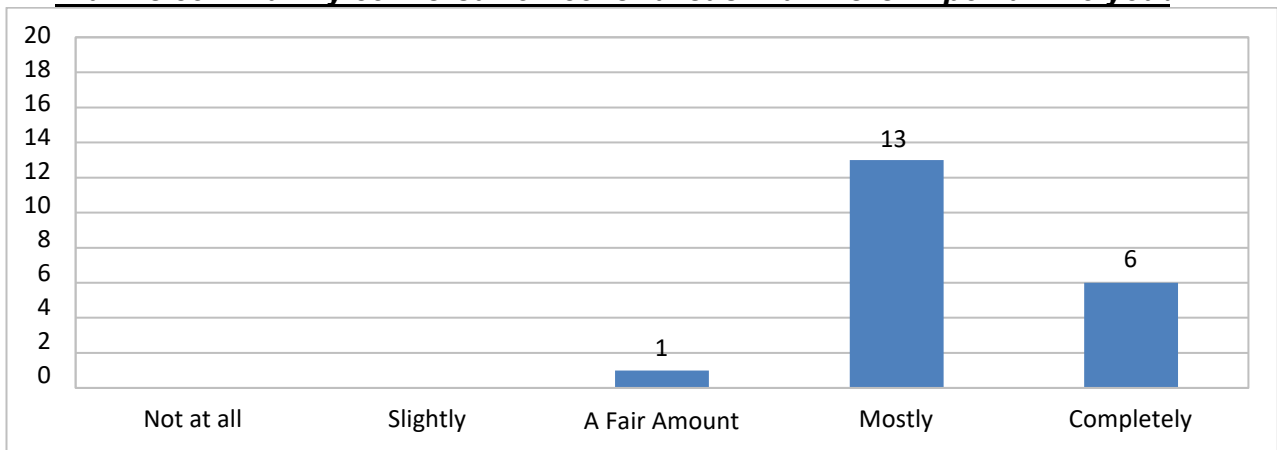
1.3 Participative



2. ***Did the community conversation meet your expectations?***



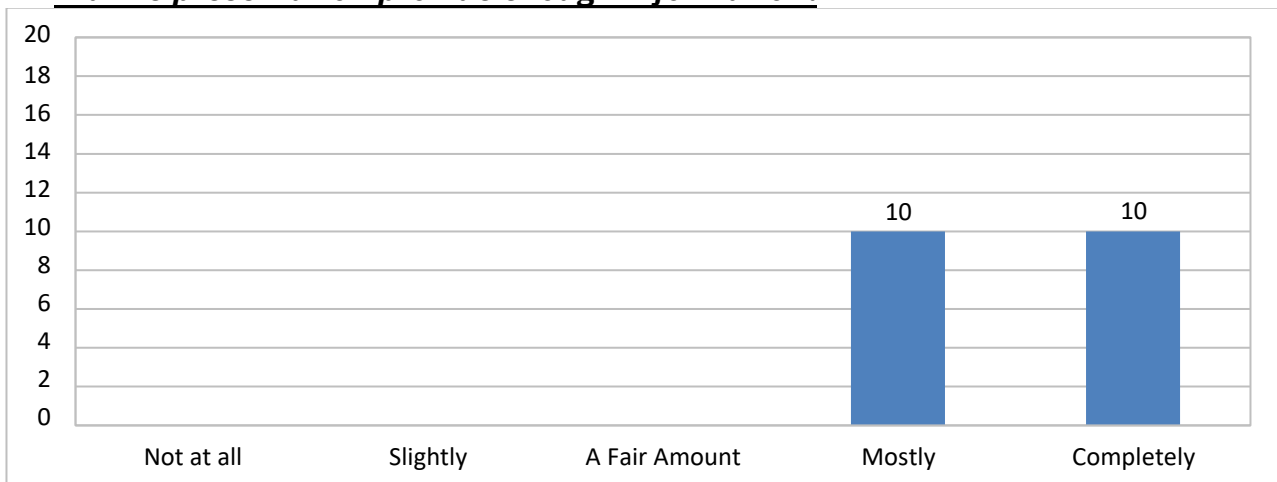
3. ***Did the community conversation cover areas that were important to you?***



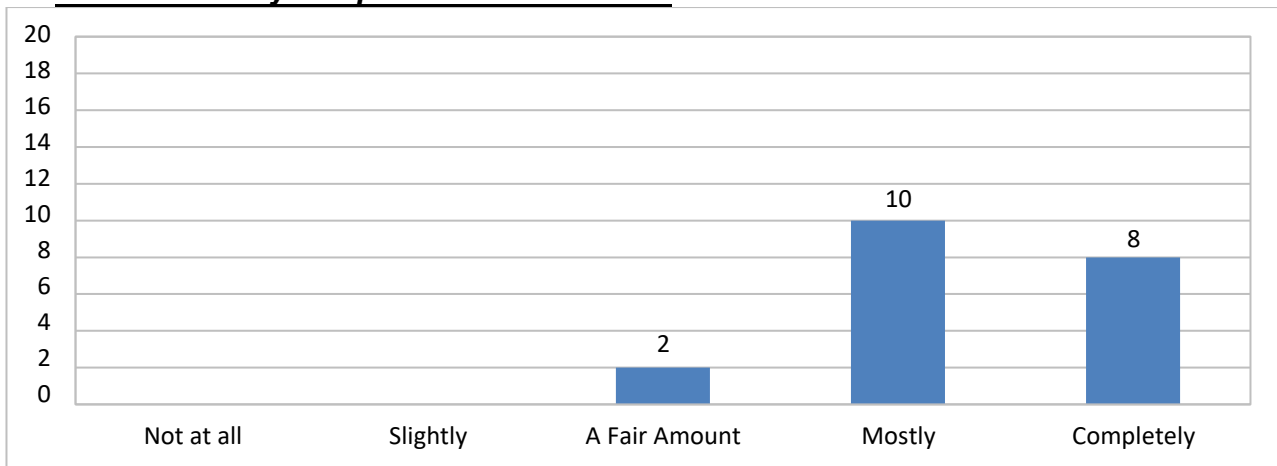
If “not at all” please specify what additional information could have been included:

- Limited time, did not allow some areas to be explored more deeply
- Spiritual

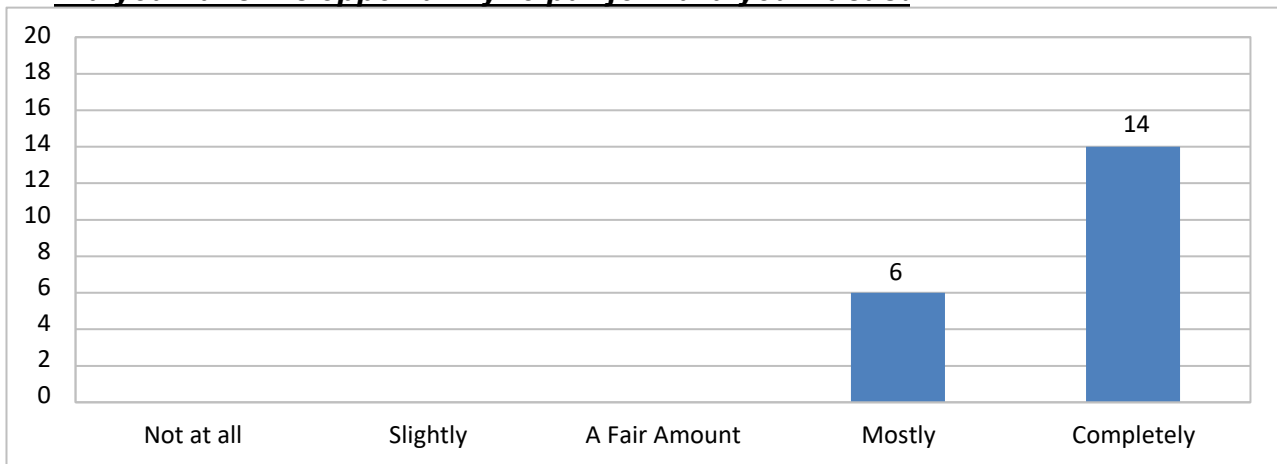
4. ***Did the presentation provide enough information?***



5. **Did well were your questions answered?**



6. **Did you have the opportunity to put forward your ideas?**



7. **Is there anything else you would like to add?**

- More discussion on mental health
- Research needs to include more varied cohorts
- Well organised and run
- My concern about research is that, if you don't fit the idea of 'normal' no age consideration given to other disabilities regarding healthy ageing
- Is this project going to inform policy (both state and federal)?
- Really useful session
- We had a great facilitator who made the session very useful
- I appreciate the opportunity to participate
- Perhaps re-think the format of the questions asked to those participating
- I thought the session was well run
- Great evening, very informative
- Some people probably needed a speaker almost can't be heard clearly
- Most people participating had many life experiences
- Rather rushed

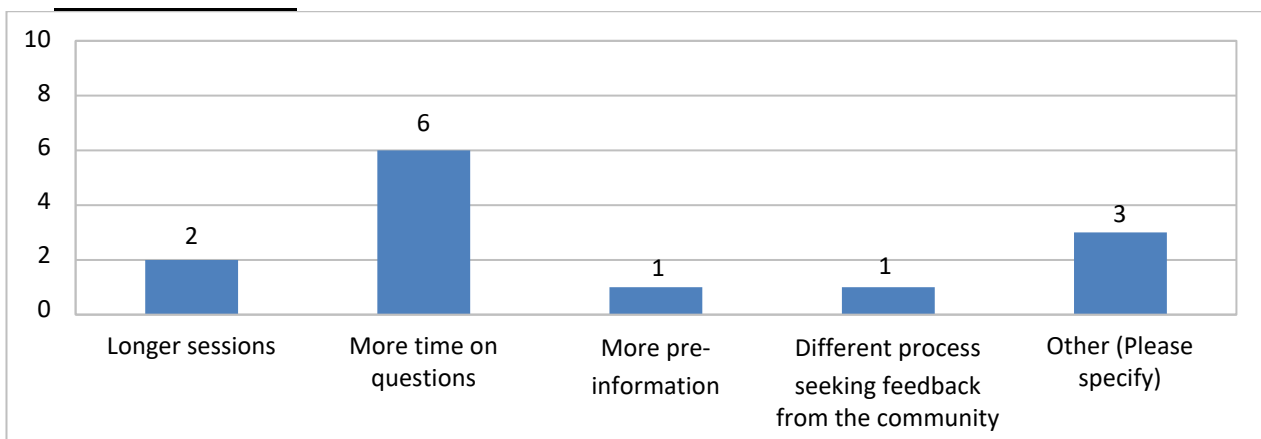
8. ***The best thing about the community conversation was:***

- Everyone had the opportunity to discuss their ideas
- Leant that not all is equal when it comes to access
- Feeling that you are not alone in your cognitive decline
- Learning that there are others like you
- Hearing other people’s experiences
- Well organised so everyone was heard
- Opening new areas of thought
- Very informative
- Hearing that others had similar concerns/problems with ageing
- Hearing what other people are doing
- You are not alone. Others have similar concerns
- Very interesting to hear from other participants and their issues re: ageing
- Hearing answers about what other people are doing
- The interaction of participants
- Hearing different views
- Interesting talk, lovely conversations
- There were a lot of experienced people leading us, very warm and friendly
- Everyone gave some input
- Ideas to implement strategies

9. ***The worst thing about the community conversation was:***

- Not enough cultural-different socio-economic variants
- Insufficient time to delve more deeply into the issues
- Tables set up too close to each other
- Some people dominated the conversation
- Some people can’t be heard
- One person was very dominant
- Think it is not a good community cross section. Lots of ‘back slapping’ trying to present a positive image rather than being honest

10. ***Do you have any suggestions about how we might improve future Community Conversations?***



Other (Please specify):

- Earlier time

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

PHONE: (08) 6151 1071

E-MAIL: ADMIN@CCIPROGRAM.ORG

WEBSITE: WWW.CCIPROGRAM.ORG

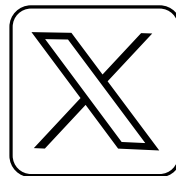
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