

The British Judo Coach Education Programme: Introducing Judo to an Older Population- for Safer Falling and Ageing well.

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Abstract

This case study highlights the education of the British Judo Association's (BJA) coaches to apply their skillset to a new demographic, that of an older population. All the population have the potential to fall, however those that are over 60 years old suffer the greatest number of fatal falls and 30% of people aged 65 and over fall at least once a year, this rises to 50% of all those aged 80 and over (Public Health England, 2017; WHO, 2021). The implications of this data show that falls are a global public health problem, with the costs from falls in the United Kingdom (UK), estimated at more than £2.3 billion per year for the National Health Service (NHS) (NICE, 2013). Dr Katrina McDonald and Dr Mike Callan were asked to consult with the BJA to co-produce a three-hour coach education module, that could be used as a revalidation event, where coaches were educated on utilising their current coaching skills with an older population. The module consists of two PowerPoint presentations, two practical tatami-based sessions and a supporting course handbook document. In the two practical sessions, a suitable syllabus was presented with 18 different exercises, that have been identified, grounded by evidence-based research, as suitable and relevant for an older population (Kamitani, 2018). Feedback from the participants on the initial pilot course, was "it was excellent" and participants observed how to adapt their coaching for an older population. Future recommendations are to offer this course to all current BJA club coaches and to offer support to assist with this exciting new initiative.

Introduction

It is predicted that by the year, 2050 there will be over 1.5 billion people over the age of 65, with all regions seeing an increase in the size of their older population between 2020-2050 (United Nations, 2020). This age group suffers the greatest number of falls, with an estimated 684,00 individuals dying each year from a fall (WHO, 2021). Age is a key risk factor for falling, with older people experience higher risks in part due to physical, sensory and cognitive changes associated with ageing (WHO, 2021). Falling has micro and macro factors of impact, specifically for those that fall, but also to their wider family but also significant societal factors with an estimated cost to the NHS at over £2 billion a year and over 4 million bed days (Fenton, 2014). Reducing the number of falls and the impact of the falls is important for maintaining the health, wellbeing and independence of older people. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines a fall "as an event which results in a person coming to rest inadvertently on the ground or floor or other lower level." In the sport of judo one must throw their opponent flat on their back to win, yet the International Judo Federation (IJF) (2007) suggests that judo is more than a sport and thus can offer society assistance with the development of safer falling for an older population.

As part of the sport of judo, *ukemi* are taught, as the ultimate way to win in judo is to throw one's opponent flat on their back. *Ukemi* are breakfalls, coaches teach participants how to fall as part of the initial lesson so that they can safely participate in the class. The average age of people who participate in judo varies depending on country and regions, however Franchini (2011) reports that competitive judo ranges from 15 years old to masters (>30 years of age), yet there is very limited data captured to adequately report on the number of participants outside of competitive judo. However, as a sport, judo have started to look to wider societal problems to see how the sport could be utilised as part of its founding pillars, *Jita Kyoei: Mutual Welfare and Benefit* (IJF, 2007).

Several studies have taken place utilising judo to combat safer falling and ageing well. Programmes and countries of origin include the Netherlands Nijmegen Falls Prevention Program (Weerdesteyn et al., 2006), Italy (Ciaccioni et al., 2020), Japan Yawara Chan Taiso (Sakuyama, et al., 2021), Spain Adapted Utilitarian Judo programme (JUA) (Toronjo-Hornillo et al., 2018), and Sweden Judo4Balance programme (Arkkukangas et al., 2021). What is yet to be captured is how to educate all judo coaches to work with this older population, and with more than 200 national federations, across five continental unions, judo has a workforce ready to focus on this societal challenge.

Context

The British Judo Association (BJA) is the National Governing Body (NGB) for judo in the UK and their role is to be the custodian and guardian of their sport (Taylor and O'Sullivan, 2009). Having recognised the potential benefits to an older population of learning safer falling principles from judo, the BJA asked Dr Katrina McDonald and Dr Mike Callan to write a coach education module for their coaching workforce, so that they can point the workforce at the social problem of ageing. As judo coaches, it should be recognised that they are already experts in teaching safer falling, with *ukemi* being utilised as an integral part of a novice participants lessons. Coaches are teaching safer falling by emphasising three main aspects: maintaining alignment and ensuring that the head does not make contact with the floor; distributing the force of the impact by making a large surface area; and by reducing the velocity by teaching the participants to use rolling to dissipate the force and to time when to initiate the first two aspects. New to coaches, is the difference that this demographic brings to learning safer falling through judo principles. Vacha-Haase et al. (2009) suggests that awareness needs to be made to the influence of age-related changes on the older people, including mental and physical changes, but also the impact of age-related developments changes, whilst being mindful of the varying group dynamics in this cohort. What this means is that the coaches needed to be made informed of the differing approach that was needed. The main differences being: 1) conducting an adaptation of The Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire for Everyone (PAR-Q+) (Bredin et al., 2013); 2) Using micro-progressions for each exercise which are small tweaks to skills; 3) recognising that mobility of the participants is as important as their age.

Methodology/ Proposed solution

For the initial delivery of the coach education course, Introducing Judo to an Older Population- for Safer Falling and Ageing well, experts from across the BJA coach membership were asked to participate. This included coach developers, physiotherapists, social workers, national coaches, and those that currently work with an older population. The pilot workshop was delivered over one day but future delivery will be as a coach revalidation three-hour face-to-face module. The workshop consisted of two PowerPoint presentations, two practical tatami-based sessions and a supporting course handbook document. In the two practical sessions, a suitable syllabus was presented with 18 different exercises, that have been identified, grounded by evidence-based research, as suitable and relevant for an older population (Kamitani, 2018).

Coach education course content

The coach education course has aims and objectives:

Learning Aims

1. Delivering to a new population (What)
2. Sport Development of how to deliver to the population (How)

Learning Objectives 1

- Understanding the population: health concerns.
- Small progression steps for adapting to this population.
- Inclusivity: including language, respectful, adaptability.
- Awareness of limitations so participants can work at their own pace.

Learning Objectives 2

- Forms to fill in to support medical guidance. PARQ Plus adaptation
- FFQ-R (6 questions)

PowerPoint 1-Theory behind safe falls for the elderly

- Welcome and introductions, domestics etc
- Structure of today's programmes
- Understanding the health concerns of the population
- Costs of Falls
- Size of the problem
- Other global solutions
- The role of judo
- Safer falls vs falls prevention
- FFQ-R

PowerPoint 2 – Sports Development initiatives

- Specific needs of the population – differences of working with this age group
- Inclusivity, language, respectful, adaptability
- Micro-progressions
- Awareness of limitations
- Funding models
- Funding for the elderly in the UK
- PARQ+
- Benefits to individual, club, association, judo family

Course Content Practical

Ne-waza

Tachi-waza

1	<i>Yoko-ukemi</i>	10	Getting up
2	Ball roll sideways	11	Squat
3	<i>Ushiro-ukemi</i>	12	Steering to <i>yoko ukemi</i>
4	Ball roll backwards	13	<i>Seoinage</i>
5	Shoulder bridge	14	Calf raises
6	Bridge and reach	15	<i>Uchimata</i>
7	Bicycle kick	16	<i>De-ashi-barai</i>
8	Threading the needle	17	<i>Tsugi-ashi</i>
9	<i>Mae-ukemi</i>	18	<i>Tai-sabaki</i>

Discussion

The pilot delivery of the coach education course was successful, with participants expressing how useful it was and recognising how as judo coaches it is a case of applying their skillset to a different demographic. Acknowledgement was made to the differences that are significant to this demographic, such as altering the language utilised and the opportunity to be inclusive in delivery by utilising micro progressions as well as regressions of each exercise. The tutors and authors of the course acknowledge the initial barriers that need to be removed by recognising that judo coaches are experts in teaching participants *ukemi* and therefore the principles of safer falling. But also identifying the transferability of this skillset to different demographics and sports.

Conclusion

The case study of the BJA's Coach Education Programme: Introducing Judo to an Older Population- for Safer Falling and Ageing well is a change of focus for coaches, pushing them to examine a global challenge and permitting them the opportunity to assist in reducing the number of falls and the impact of the falls. The initial delivery of this course was successful, and the three-hour workshop will be offered as a re-validation event to coaches across the UK. Focusing 200 national federations, with their coaching workforce at this global problem

could impact the health, wellbeing and independence of older people. It could also offer national federations an opportunity for different revenue opportunities to help support this initiative, whilst also bringing a different demographic into the judo family, who will also bring a different outlook and perspectives. The impact of this work from judo offers the potential to assist national health services and reduce the cost of falls to the wider community. It is epitomes' *Jita Kyoei* and is an area that needs greater development and support.

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