**ID: 1578**  
**Congress: The First International & 4th National Congress on health Education & Promotion, 2011**  
**Title: Perceptions of older people about physical activity**  
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**Abstract:** Introduction: Physical activity is a low cost and non-pharmacologic intervention which has low side effects and is accessible for the majority of people. Existing evidence suggests older adults and people with disabilities can gain significant health benefits with a regular physical activity, especially at the recommended level of physical activity. Also, Physical inactivity is a major risk factor for developing coronary artery disease, stroke, diabetes mellitus and high blood pressure. However, despite existing evidence regarding the beneficial effects of physical activity on mental and physical health and also efforts to promote physical activity by experts and authorities, sedentary behavior is very prevalent among older people. While recent research has explored the barriers and facilitators to physical activity among older people, less attention has been paid to the perceptions of older people regarding physical activity.

**Method and materials:** This qualitative study aimed to explore the perceptions of older people living in Tehran about physical activity in 2009. The sample comprised 40 community-dwelling older people aged 60 years and over. Data were collected via face-to-face in-depth interviews and analyzed with the assistance of NVivo software.

**Results:** The findings revealed that the concept of physical activity was not understood clearly. Furthermore, participants were uncertain about the kind or level of physical activity was appropriate for them. Many participants were aware of the advantages of physical activity and disadvantages of physical inactivity. Some participants have concerned about the negative and even serious consequences of physical activity such as heart problems, collapse, stroke and even death, or other consequences like falling, injury, or muscle and joint problems.

**Discussion and Conclusions:** While further researches are needed, based on these exploratory findings we need to teach older people about the concept of physical activity and the recommended level of physical activity to be able to increase the level of knowledge and understanding about physical activity among older people.

**Key words:** older people, physical activity, education

**Presentation:** Poster