

Evaluation of the National Institute on Aging's AgePage Series

Final Report
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National Institute on Aging Evaluation of the *AgePage* Series

Executive Summary

In its mission to disseminate health information to the public, the National Institute on Aging (NIA) produces a variety of resources on a wide range of topics, including the *AgePage* series. *AgePages* offer readers basic information about a health or age-related topic and a list of resources for where to learn more. In 2008, NIA planned an evaluation of the *AgePage* series to determine whether the *AgePages* meet the health information needs of the target audience; if changes might enhance the *AgePages*; if new *AgePage* topics are needed; and if there are new ways to raise awareness of the *AgePages*.

Evaluation

NOVA Research Company was contracted by NIA to plan and conduct focus groups in order to evaluate the *AgePage* series. The focus groups were designed to answer the following evaluation questions:

1. Are *AgePages* an accessible, preliminary source of health information for older adults?
2. Do *AgePages* provide easy-to-read, easy-to-understand overviews of health-related topics?
3. Is the current format/design of the pamphlets effective for older readers?
4. Do the current *AgePage* topics include key relevant subjects of interest to older adults?
5. Does the *AgePage* audience have any new ideas for ways to disseminate and promote the resource?

Six focus groups were held with a total of 46 individuals. Participants ranged from 60 to 85 years old and represented a variety of ethnic/racial and educational backgrounds. Three focus groups were held in Silver Spring, Maryland, and three in Miami, Florida.

Conclusions

1. *AgePages* are viewed as a preliminary source of health information for older adults.

Focus group participants viewed the *AgePages* as a preliminary source of information and realized that the *AgePages* were meant to give readers an overview of a topic. Group members also unanimously agreed that the material was appropriate for older adults.

2. *AgePages* provide easy-to-read, easy-to-understand overviews of health-related topics.

Participants from all the focus groups found the *AgePages* to contain useful, interesting, and new information. They thought the materials were written in everyday language, were easy to read, and gave basic information that was easy to understand.

3. The current format/design of the pamphlets is effective for older readers.

Most participants liked the current *AgePage* format, finding the accordion style to be very convenient in that it could be easily folded, stored, and read anywhere. Pamphlet size and font were appropriate for seniors.

Most participants thought they would be likely to pick up an *AgePage* if they saw it displayed. They thought the title “*AgePage*” was one of the most attention grabbing aspects because of the word “age.” However, some participants thought NIA should consider using a colored font for

the title of the topic and adding pictures of older people or something more personalized and age-appropriate to attract attention.

4. The current *AgePage* topics include key relevant subjects of interest to older adults.

The participants felt that the *AgePage* topics met their health information needs and are also likely to meet the needs of their friends and family. They found the range of topics to be diverse, interesting, and useful.

5. The *AgePage* audience had several new ideas for ways to promote and disseminate the resource.

Most focus group participants had not previously heard of *AgePages* and emphasized that they thought people needed to know about this resource, suggesting a variety of outreach mechanisms and dissemination strategies.