Abstract

Objective: To analyze the reasons among the long-lived elderly for participating and continuing in physical activities programs. Methods: The participants in this study were eighty-seven elderly individuals, aged 80 or older, belonging to support groups in Florianópolis (SC). A semi-structured interview was applied and interpreted by means of thematic content analysis. Results: The reasons for participating in physical activities programs were: health promotion/maintenance; pleasure in physical activities; medical recommendation; incentives from friends, family and professionals; socialization; keeping oneself active; having an occupation/diversion; feeling well; and esthetics. The reasons for continuing were: health promotion/maintenance; pleasure in physical activities; socialization; feeling well; remaining active; good professionals; and medical recommendation. Conclusion: The main factors that motivate the long-lived elderly to initiate and continue in physical activities programs are linked to health perceptions and psychosocial aspects. Knowledge of these factors enables interventions that help the elderly stay in these programs for prolonged periods of time.

Keywords
Aged, 80 and over, Income, Health of the elderly, Physical activity.