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INTRODUCTION

Safe falling skills, adapted from judo, have the potential to reduce falls and fall-related injuries in older adults. However, widespread implementation is limited by workforce capacity.

AIMS

To upskill Allied Health Professionals and Judo Coaches to teach safe falling skills to older adults by examining a novel Train-the-Trainer program. Outcomes included trainees' perceived importance and competence in teaching safe falling, as well as objective knowledge and their own safe falling skills.

METHODS

The Train-the-Trainer program included 2-day workshop followed by 8 weekly practical sessions in the Dynamic Balance for Life® (DBfL) Safe Falling Program allowing trainees to observe older adults and gain practical teaching experience.



Assessments were conducted at T1: pre-workshop, T2: post-workshop and T3: post-practise, and included perceived importance and competence in teaching safe falling (6-point Likert Scale), objective knowledge (10 multiple-choice questions), and trainees' own safe falling skills (Strömquist-Bååthe Safe Falling Test). Changes across T1, T2 and T3 were analysed using linear mixed-effects models.

RESULTS

A total of 16 trainees (n=8 allied health professionals; n=8 judo coaches) participated (median age 50 years [IQR: 42–61], 37.5% female).

Among the allied health professionals, five were physiotherapists and three were exercise physiologists. All had at least 2 years' experience working with older adults.

All judo coaches had a minimum of first degree black-belt (shodan) and at least 2 years experience teaching beginners.

Six judo coaches were from interstate and attended the practical sessions virtually, whereas all eight allied health professionals attended the practical sessions in person. The 2-day workshop was delivered in person for all trainees. There were no withdrawals.

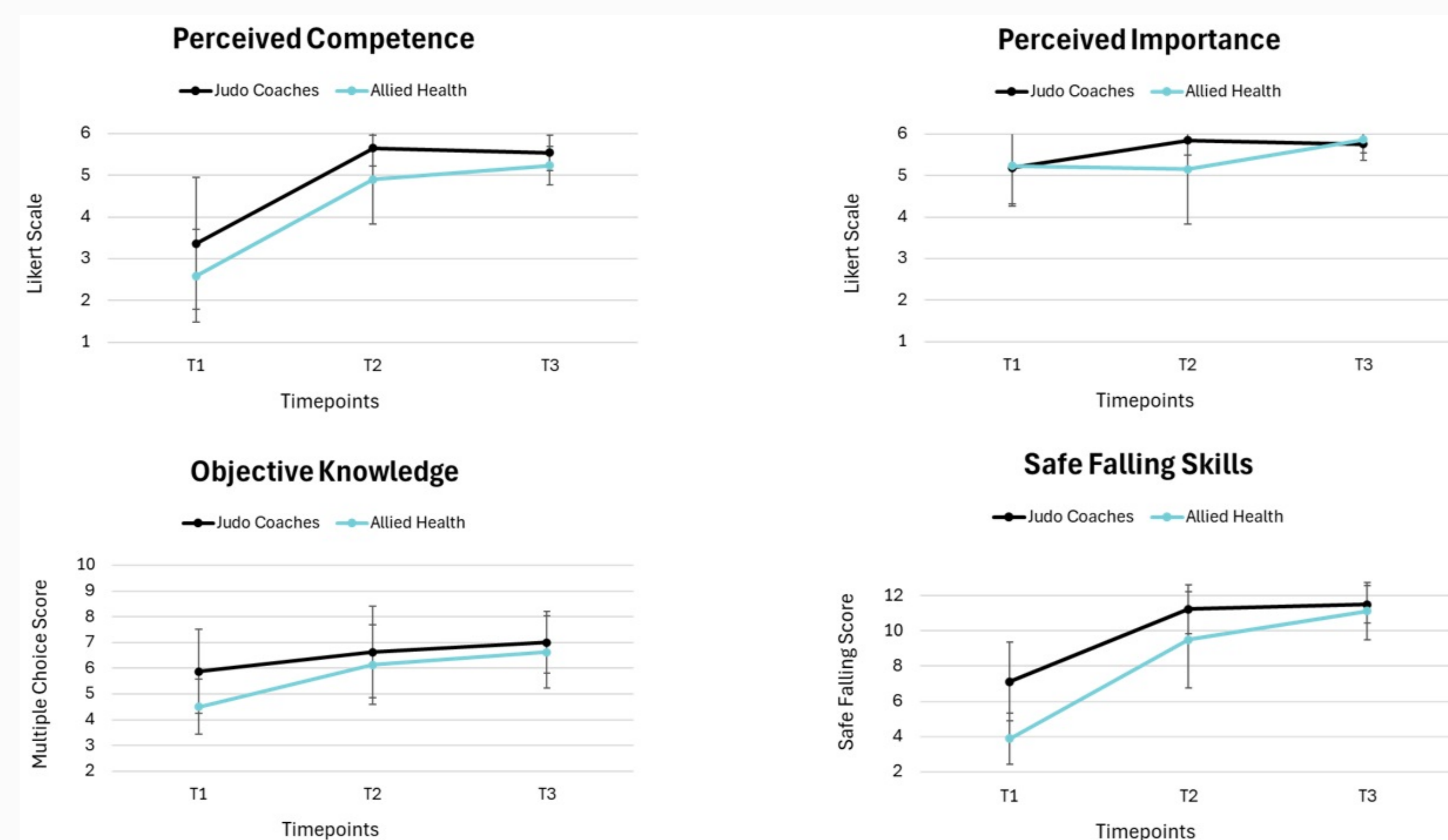


Figure 1. Changes in outcomes measures at T1, T2 and T3 by professional group

Perceived competence, objective knowledge, and safe falling skills improved significantly after the 2-day workshop (T2, $p < .001$) in both groups compared to T1 and remained high after the practical sessions (T3, $p > 0.5$).

Perceived importance was already high at T1 and only improved after the full Train-the-Trainer program (T3, $p = .011$).

Judo coaches scored higher overall in safe falling ($p = .004$), but both groups showed similar improvements over time ($p = .079$) closing the gap by the end of the Train-the-Trainer program.

Table 1: Post-hoc comparisons of outcome measures across time points

Outcome	Comparison	Mean Difference	95% CI	p-value
Perceived Competence	T1 – T2	-2.30	-2.98, -1.63	<.001*
	T1 – T3	-2.41	-3.08, -1.75	<.001*
	T2 – T3	-0.11	-0.46, 0.24	.513
Perceived Importance	T1 – T2	-0.29	-0.59, 0.02	.061
	T1 – T3	-0.60	-1.03, -0.16	.011*
	T2 – T3	-0.31	-0.80, 0.19	.205
Objective Knowledge	T1 – T2	-1.19	-1.96, -0.41	.005*
	T1 – T3	-1.63	-2.48, -0.77	.001*
	T2 – T3	-0.44	-1.55, 0.67	.412
Safe Falling Skills	T1 – T2	-4.88	-6.31, -3.44	<.001*
	T1 – T3	-5.81	-7.14, -4.49	<.001*
	T2 – T3	-0.94	-1.97, 0.09	.071

CI: Confidence Interval, *:significant

CONCLUSION

This Train-the-Trainer program has the potential to effectively upskill allied health professionals and instructors to deliver safe falling training to older adults across community and clinical settings, complementing existing strategies that aim to reduce falls and fall-related injuries in older adults.