Defining Program Sustainability: Differing Views of Stakeholders

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: Sustainability is a highly desired outcome of health promotion programs, yet it often eludes program planners looking to achieve it. This study aimed to uncover how the goal of program sustainability was interpreted by key stakeholders from three fall prevention program demonstration sites.

Method: Collected as part of a larger study on program sustainability that made use of a multiple case study methodology, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants involved in a wide range of program initiatives throughout the two-year funding period.

Results: Forty participants across the three sites provided definitions of sustainability. Most stakeholders reported that it was some version of the general fall prevention program that should be sustained. Fewer stakeholders reported that it was the successful elements or solutions to the program goals that should be sustained. The most common suggestions reported by stakeholders for how sustainability should be achieved were awareness raising and securing new funding sources. Although a number of key elements emerged, there were significant differences in stakeholders' definitions of sustainability, both within and between demonstration sites.

Conclusion: This research provided insight into the unique meanings of sustainability held by different stakeholders during their involvement in a fall prevention program. The array of definitions held by stakeholders demonstrates how easily the efforts of those involved can become fragmented and, therefore, less effective in reaching the end goal of program sustainability when the project team is not working from the same definition of what that goal means.

Key words: Program sustainability; accidental falls; health promotion

La traduction du résumé se trouve à la fin de l'article.

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Sustainability is viewed as an important dimension of the quality of health promotion programs.¹ It is accepted that for communities and participants to derive long-term health benefits, programs and program involvement must be maintained in the long term.² For example, preventing falls in the community is an ongoing process that cannot be effectively dealt with by a short-term approach. At the community level, there are on a continual basis new individuals entering into older adulthood and emerging as potential participants for health promotion and injury prevention. At the individual level, people need to maintain their health and abilities over time. This need is seldom fulfilled by a short involvement in a health promotion program. However, funding bodies often support demonstration projects for only a short duration. The strategy is to provide seed monies to programs so that after the demonstration period and funding have elapsed, the program would sustain itself.

Sustainability is integral to funding agencies that wish to get extra mileage out of their funding dollars. Sustainability is also essential because long-term continuation is critical to health promotion program effectiveness.³ Several authors have suggested that there is no consensus for a definition of sustainability.³⁻⁵ When a definition is provided, the terms institutionalization, routinization, incorporation, program maintenance, and sustainability have been used.^{2,6-9} A number of examples of definitions used in the literature have been paraphrased in Table 1. It is not surprising then that many studies and community projects provide no definition for sustainability.¹⁰ Inconsistency of definitions has led directly to a lack of guidance on how to promote and attain program sustainability.¹¹

The varied definitions presented in the literature distort a clear understanding and, therefore, use of that meaning in practical applications. This prompted the question of what is interpreted when a funding agency states that a project should work toward program sustainability. How can a project team be successful in evaluating its actions and ultimately achieving sustainability if each member of the team is working toward a different version of what that entails? The purpose of this study was to document what was meant by the term 'sustainability' for stakeholders directly involved in the planning and implementation of a community-based fall prevention demonstration project. This paper will illustrate the array of definitions provided by community stakeholders and discuss the ramifications for health promotion programs.

METHOD

The current research was part of a larger study on stakeholder perceptions of program sustainability. Through the use of a holistic, multiple case study methodology,¹² the definition of sustainability was obtained from each stakeholder through semi-structured, in-person interviews.

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Table 1. Definitions of Sustainability Provided by the Research Literature

First Author	Year	Definition Provided
Steckler ²	1989	• Institutionalization: the integration and long-term viability of a new program within an existing organization
Bracht ⁷	1994	• Incorporation: the transfer of responsibility from the external initiating agency to the incorporating agency, where the incorporating agency assumes complete responsibility
Brown ¹⁵	1998	• Sustainability: conversion of institutional capacity into the performance required for continued effectiveness
O'Loughlin ¹⁶	1998	• Sustainability: the extent to which a new program becomes integrated or embedded into an organization's normal operations
Olsen ¹⁷	1998	• Sustainable health service: the long-term ability of an organizational system to mobilize and allocate appropriate and sufficient resources for public health activities
Shediac-Rizkallah ⁹	1998	• Sustainability: the notion of continuation of a program that has the ability to be dynamic rather than inflexible
Glasgow ¹	1999	• Institutionalization: when a practice or policy becomes routine and part of an organization's everyday culture and norms
Crisp ⁵	2000	• Capacity building: to improve community health practices that are sustained after the limited period of external resources
Evaishwick ¹⁸	2003	• Sustainability: a program that endures from its inception
Mancini ¹⁹	2004	• Sustainability: a program's continuous response to community issues
Pluye ¹¹	2004	• Sustainability: produced by programs that are routinized within organizations, where the program intended to be sustained is backed up by an organization
Nilsen ³	2005	• Sustainability: the maintenance of a level of activity so the program will provide continuous management of a health problem
Pluye ⁶	2005	• Sustainability: the continuation of a program
Humphreys ²⁰	2006	• Sustainability: the ability to provide ongoing access to appropriate quality care in a manner that is both cost-efficient and health-effective

Program setting

The setting in which this research took place was a community-based falls prevention demonstration project implemented in three Ontario test sites as a feasibility study. The first community was a Northern and geographically confined community, where the fall prevention program was driven by the private sector through an entrepreneurial model. The second community was a geographically dispersed and rural area, while the third community was an urban city. In both the second and third communities, the fall prevention program was housed within Public Health. Each site had some aspect of programming under each of five strategy areas: awareness-raising and information dissemination, community education, policy development, home safety measures, and working with general practitioners and other health professionals.¹³

Participating stakeholders

Participant recruitment began by contacting the project leader at each site, who then notified their local stakeholders of the study. Agreeing stakeholders were then contacted by the researcher to arrange a convenient interview date and location during a week-long site visit. An effort was made to interview stakeholders involved in a wide range of program components at each site. This ensured maximum variation of the information collected about the implemented strategies and programs. Key stakeholders interviewed included project leaders, project team members, organizers and implementers of specific initiatives, program volunteers, and older adult participants. Interviews began six months after program funding had ended and were conducted by the same researcher (HH).

Interview format

The focused interview format followed a case study protocol outlined prior to the beginning of data collection and made use of open-ended questions, which allowed informants to provide their insights and opinions.¹² The interview question regarding the definition of sustainability was, "When the funding body stated that one of the goals of the project was that the project would be 'sustainable' beyond the two-year funding that they provided, what did that goal mean to you?" Prompts were developed to re-direct the stakeholder's response if necessary. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and entered into N'Vivo 7 qualitative data software for analysis.¹⁴

Data preparation

Interview transcripts were read multiple times and then two authors, HH and AS, developed the initial coding scheme and code descriptions. To ensure the coding scheme could be accurately interpreted and applied by others, an outside researcher was asked to complete a reliability check which produced a number of inter-rater reliability measures. Overall, 83% of the coded definitions were agreed upon in their entirety. The individual coding categories, discussed in further detail below, were found to have inter-rater reliability ratings of 97%, 95%, and 88% for the *verb*, *what*, and *how* components of the coding scheme respectively. Similarities and differences were discussed and consensus was reached on all disagreements. The study was approved by The University of Western Ontario Research Ethics Board.

RESULTS

Forty stakeholders across the three demonstration communities provided definitions of sustainability. Stakeholders (35 female and 5 male) came from a variety of backgrounds including health professionals (n=10), business owners (n=5), senior volunteers (n=10), and those with public health (n=4), municipal (n=4), or seniors' services involvement (n=7). The senior volunteers were either part of the program delivery, a consumer of the program, or both. The gender split of the sample coincided with the fact that the majority of involved stakeholders in all three communities, both paid and volunteer, were female. The total interview lengths ranged from 20 to 74 minutes, with the average length being 32 minutes.

The coding scheme that evolved from analysis of the data included three components of a definition of sustainability (see Figure 1): a *verb* component, a *what* component, and a *how* component, although individual definitions did not necessarily have all three. The *verb* component was operationally defined as the word or phrase used to describe an action, state, or occurrence. The *verbs* used by stakeholders included to continue, keep alive, remain, evolve, carry on, further itself, or to be maintained, long-term, or ongoing. Some of the phrases coded as *verbs* were only roughly equivalent to the strict grammatical use of the term verb. The *what* component was defined as the behaviour or product for which continuation was desired, and was divided into two branches. Stakeholders commented on continuation of the fall prevention program or continuation of the solution to the program goals. The *how* component was defined as the specific action that was taken

Figure 1. Developed coding scheme for stakeholders’ definitions of sustainability

Table 2. Coding Descriptions for Stakeholders’ Definitions of Sustainability

Code Name	Description of Code
The Verb	Operational Definition: the word or phrase used to describe the action, occurrence, or existence
What will be sustained	Operational Definition: the behaviour or product for which continuation is desired
Fall prevention program developed	• Either the prevention program, a portion of the program, or specific initiatives will be sustained
Generic prevention program	• A generic description implying that either the prevention program or its initiatives will be sustained (see Participant 2, Site 3, Table 3)
Successful elements of the program	• The parts of the prevention program that were found to be successful will be sustained (see Participant 3, Site 2, Table 3)
Solution to the program goals	• Actions carried out to solve or attain any goal set at the beginning of the program
Generic solutions	• A generic description implying that it is the program goals that are to be sustained (see Participant 6, Site 1, Table 3)
Lifestyle change	• People change their health and/or behaviour so as to become safer (see Participant 15, Site 1, Table 3)
Knowledge gain	• The community has knowledge about falls and fall prevention (see Participant 8, Site 1, Table 3)
How the ‘what’ will be sustained	Operational Definition: specific actions taken to allow a program to continue on
Volunteer committee	• The contribution of human time and services would be voluntary (see Participant 4, Site 1, Table 3)
Awareness raising	• Generating awareness of falls or the prevention program and their importance for older adults (see Participant 2, Site 2, Table 3)
Self-fund	• Providing resources to meet program needs without external assistance (see Participant 14, Site 1, Table 3)
Public education	• Providing educational programming about falls and fall prevention (see Participant 4, Site 2, Table 3)
Institutionalization or Routinization	• The program, or elements of the program, would be embedded into existing organizations and procedures (see Participant 14, Site 3, Table 3)
New money or funding	• Financial resources generated from external sources (see Participant 12, Site 3, Table 3)
Continuous planning	• Early and/or constant planning around achieving sustainability (see Participant 3, Site 3, Table 3)
Partnership creation	• The utilization or creation of partnership and networking opportunities (see Participant 8, Site 3, Table 3)

in order to allow a program to continue. Detailed descriptions of the codes can be found in Table 2.

Each stakeholder was asked to provide a description of what sustainability meant in his or her own words. By allowing stakeholders to provide a description of how they interpreted the term, an understanding of the working concept they used while being involved in the project became evident. Variations in the stakeholders’ definitions of sustainability at the individual level are provided in Table 3 and exemplify the variability of definitions within each of the three demonstration sites. The frequency of use for the *what* and *how* component codes can be found in Table 4 and exem-

plify the variability at the community level, or across the three demonstration sites.

While a number of key elements emerged, substantial diversity was evident both within and between demonstration sites. Some stakeholders identified sustainability as being the continuation of the entire program into the future. Others viewed sustainability as the lasting impact of particular initiatives. Some stakeholders saw sustainability as being achieved if the program could continue without financial assistance, while others indicated a financial aspect was necessary for the program to be sustained.

Table 3. Quotations of the Definitions of Sustainability Provided by Stakeholders in Response to the Question, "When the funding body stated that one of the goals of the project was that the project would be 'sustainable' beyond the two-year funding that they provided, what did that goal mean to you?"

Participant	Definition Provided
<i>Demonstration Site 1</i>	
1	• Anything that had been put in place would continue. Just to keep things going, not just to come to a sudden stop.
2	• Something that would be carried on. There is no point to starting a project and not going further with it.
3	• The project and work that we were doing would be carried on somewhere else, it wasn't just going to die in the water... It would have been a waste to have done all the work we did and not have it carried forward.
4	• Keeping the project alive, it doesn't necessarily mean putting money into it, but keeping it alive and educating the public. Every organization is normally going to do their own part, ... So it would just be a matter of a volunteer committee to oversee it and keep it going. So, the sustainability meant to me that we would maintain a program to educate the general public and future afterwards, after it's complete.
5	• Any program that was starting was going to be able to run on its own within a year's time.
6	• A long-term solution with regard to the goals of the project. ...It shouldn't be there just for the short-term periods, it's something that you are looking for in terms of a long-term solution or sustainable solution for perpetuity.
7	• That the project would further itself and we would actually have an office set up in [the community]. ...what I was hoping we would get out of this project is that we had pretty much an office or some sort of project that continued past the two-year initial term.
8	• Some of the projects and some of the knowledge be maintained and distributed throughout the community...I don't know that the timeframe really came into mind but just the knowledge mobilization...just to create awareness and basically learn and maintain that knowledge within the community.
9	• That the people who were originally involved in it really go on working on the concept for years afterwards and keep reminding all of the people that you get involved with that there was a program started, it was [a fall prevention program] and it opens people's eyes and hopefully in the years following there will still be groups of people who are passing the message on.
10	• Once the project ended, that there are still other programs that were created because of [the fall prevention program] that continue to run within the community.
11	• That it continues on and that it's supported and it doesn't just die ...and so therefore it needs to have people who are doing something to keep it in focus, keep it in front of everybody.
12	• Something that would keep on going, last, keep on after the real structured part of the exercise sessions or the [fall prevention] program itself was finished.
13	• That it will be implemented and it will be sustained, it will continue and be successful.
14	• That you can carry it on, on its own. The funding would have been used to set it up initially and then from there once it was set up, that it would be able to self-fund itself and carry on from there.
15	• That goal inspired us to design a program that would help the participants achieve a long-term lifestyle change based on the education they received.
<i>Demonstration Site 2</i>	
1	• Well I'm not too sure, I think you just mean to carry on, just to carry it on.
2	• Continuing to get the message out, to continue to get people thinking on this issue of how to keep themselves from falling. If you can keep it in the face of the public, they think about it.
3	• That there is a capacity within the organization or organizations that are involved, ...to continue to offer the elements of [the fall prevention program] that have been successful without sort of ongoing requirement for resources, that it can be integrated in sort of the business of the day and doesn't need to have continued support in terms of finances or extra staffing or whatever in order to be able to continue.
4	• The thing that's important is that there was a very strong public education component across a broad range of issues...so I think that ongoing education across a whole range of approaches, through doctor's offices, through seniors' groups and meeting places, through retirement homes and long term care facilities, through medical centers, through pharmacies, churches, through the media, wherever and however messages can be gotten to, not only for older adults but to the families to point out here are some of the risks and here are some of the consequences of falls and here are some ways to help prevent them or to make sure that people are as safe as possible.
5	• I don't think they should stop all of the sudden. How to sustain it, well there would have to be money go into the budget for the Health Unit to have someone engaged and doing it.
6	• An ongoing need or requirement for us, an ongoing wish to have us do this. Getting people to talk about it so that they will talk to old people.
7	• It means that you wouldn't have the same amount of money from the same place to be working with so you either had to make it self-sufficient or to find alternate funding or some way to cover the expenses of the project.
8	• Will you have enough resources to sustain it by way of funding for advertising like pamphlets, any mileage, etcetera.
9	• The program would be able to continue in the community without the support of the funding.
10	• When the project was over after the 2-year funding, there would still be projects going on in the community.
<i>Demonstration Site 3</i>	
1	• That the initiative would remain in the community supported somehow by the community, and that would probably entail dollars, volunteers, that kind of things. So, looking to having it stay in the community. Either the same as we had initiated it, or a variation of it depending on how it had progressed.
2	• The ability to continue whatever program or initiative you are developing into the future ongoing as the need dictates. It's looking at developing something long term versus short term and looking at resources, be it financial or otherwise, to be able to continue whatever project or initiative ongoing into the future.
3	• Having a program remain as a core program for [my organization]...So sustainability has pieces in each step of program development, so from start to finish you are building in checks and balances to ensure that the program has life and continued life.
4	• That anything that we really needed to set up in the beginning we needed to look at what would this look like at the end of the two years, sort of thinking ahead and keeping that in mind all along, where do we want to be at the end of the two years and what do we want to be able to continue to do.
5	• The impact of the program continues, that it doesn't end when the program ends. One of the working groups decided they wanted to continue to meet, they didn't feel that the job was totally finished, so the partnerships that had developed, people wanted to continue to develop further.
6	• It meant that it continued on.
7	• Not just instituting any type of program or project but also ensuring that the benefits of that project extend over a period of time, and hopefully to continue to evolve and adapt to become further successful or maintain success.
8	• It meant the possibility of networking with other community providers and being able to continue with what we started with our particular provider, being able to continue with that through the network that we formed.
9	• That it is ongoing after the fact. So sustainability could mean quite simply that there could be a transfer to another agency in order that the projects or multiple projects are ongoing and could take even different routes and avenues to make sure that physical health environment is maintained down the line.
10	• It would be the provision of the resources required to continue to offer the service or programming components, so that would be money, it could be donations in-kind in terms of provision of people to do the work as required.
11	• Continuation of what you've been doing. ...continues

Table 3. continued

12	• To keep reaching out into the community to the seniors and to keep the program going, finding new ways to fund the program.
13	• To keep it going constantly, not just here and there but we should be going steady all the time at it.
14	• I think it's obviously very key because you don't want to just do a project in isolation and have nothing continue on. There were so many community links made, I guess they just blossomed further...you had people from so many different agencies working in all these different initiatives so that happily came into fruition so I really think the key to sustainability is having those other agencies available to take some of the projects under their wing and continue them on.
15	• It means ongoing, whether or not there is funding or not, so there has to be some way, some body or function built into the whole process where people continue to meet, and one of the big focuses has been to continue to make public aware of [the fall prevention project] and how it applies and the benefits of people being aware of it...to remain in people's minds.

Table 4. Coding Frequencies for Sustainability Definitions Provided by Stakeholders

Code Name	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Total
<i>What</i> will be sustained				
Prevention program developed				
Generic prevention program	12	7	13	32
Successful elements of the program	0	1	2	3
Solution to the program goals				
Generic Solutions	1	0	0	1
Lifestyle change	1	0	0	1
Knowledge gain	1	2	0	3
<i>How</i> the 'what' will be sustained				
Volunteer committee	1	0	2	3
Awareness raising	3	3	1	7
Self-fund	1	2	0	3
Public education	3	1	0	4
Institutionalization or Routinization	0	1	3	4
New money or funding	0	2	4	6
Continuous planning	0	0	2	2
Partnership creation	0	0	3	3

DISCUSSION

This paper aimed to clarify the definition or meaning of the concept of sustainability held by stakeholders involved in a fall prevention program for older adults. A significant finding is the diversity of meanings given by stakeholders. Variation in sustainability definitions within and across the demonstration sites highlights two possible sources of difference, each with distinct potential impacts on program sustainability.

Community-level variation in sustainability definitions, or variation across the three demonstration sites, was an inherent factor in the present study. The funding body structured the program as a feasibility study and selected each of the three participating communities for their unique characteristics. Therefore, it could be expected that the definitions of sustainability at each demonstration site would vary slightly and may be a realistic reflection of the conditions in each community setting. For example, existing knowledge, established networks with other community organizations, and available human resources all contributed to the program implemented at each site. Further, the program structure employed, whether an entrepreneurial model such as Site 1 or a public health model as in Sites 2 and 3, should also be expected to contribute to community-level variation in sustainability definitions.

Of far greater importance is the variation of definitions at the individual level, where differences in the meaning of sustainability could potentially hinder program sustainability. Diversity could dilute the energy given to, and consensus around, any one strategy, possibly resulting in conflicting expectations or potential actions. For example, there is a conceptual and practical difference between seeking new funding and promoting positive, long-term health effects for current program participants. Project teams had to decide how best to spend a finite amount of money, time, and energy. Common understanding would allow communities and their implemented strategies to be more focused and likely more effective through efficiently spent time, energy, and resources.

In addition to highlighting some practical issues related to the array of definitions and lack of consensus among stakeholders, the above findings add to our conceptualization of sustainability. Shediach-Rizkallah and Bone suggest three perspectives on sustainability:⁹ a) the maintenance of health benefits over time, b) institutionalization of a program or program components, and c) community capacity building. It is clear from Table 4 that the majority of stakeholders interviewed provided a program view. Few people mentioned the continuation of health benefits (e.g., see lifestyle change) or community capacity building (e.g., see knowledge gain). This focus is likely understandable in the present context as the fall prevention strategy was presented by the funding agency as a program initiative. A perusal of the definitions of sustainability provided in Table 1 from the research literature also indicates the same focus.

Three stakeholders (see Table 4) talked about sustaining *successful* elements of their program. It seems logical that only the elements of a program that work and for which there is a need be maintained. Scheirer argued that two of the key factors affecting sustainability were that benefits are readily perceived by stakeholders and that programs can be modified over time.¹⁰ The counter-implication is that unsuccessful elements be discarded and that this be an essential component of sustainable strategies. In her definition of sustainability, Participant 1, Site 1 suggested that "anything" that is put in place would be continued. However, as Participant 6, Site 1 suggested, it seems more effective to "sustain long-term solutions to the goals of a project." This implies that programs should have the capacity to adapt and that our conceptualization of sustainability must be sensitive to this need for change. This view is in agreement with Brown who argued that sustainability is about continued effectiveness.¹⁵ In this regard, he suggested that (institutional) learning is central to sustainability because it allows for adaptation over time.

As Table 4 suggests, most stakeholders included comments about the actions to be taken (*how*) to sustain their programs, ranging from finding new money to seeking volunteer support. Whereas, when compared to the research literature, the entire list in Table 4 is fairly comprehensive, no community or individual was represented in all of the coded categories. There also seemed to be a different focus in each community. For example, Site 3 was the only site that mentioned partnership creation. On the other hand, no one in Site 3 mentioned self-funding as an action that could be taken to sustain their program. It is clear then that while the literature is rich with examples of how to promote sustainability, many of which are represented in the *how* category of Table 4, the individual stakeholders and communities in this study did not demonstrate a comprehensive understanding. After reviewing 19 articles, Scheirer made several recommendations to stakeholders at all levels (community, funding agency, researchers, policy-makers) on how to enhance sustainability.¹⁰ However, nowhere does she sug-

gest that promoting a broader and perhaps consistent understanding of sustainability would be beneficial. The current study points to this need. It is clearly not sufficient to assume that stakeholders know what is meant by sustainability.

A limitation of this study is the inability to compare responses of various levels of stakeholders between each site. Communities were given the flexibility to organize their project team, involved stakeholders, and program components in the manner they deemed most appropriate given the needs of their community. This resulted in each site assigning different roles or responsibilities to the various stakeholders. The variability in organizational structure, therefore, eliminated the ability to meaningfully compare the definitions provided by stakeholder group – project leaders, for example – across the three sites.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research are applicable to practitioners and researchers alike. Practitioners should think carefully about implicit meanings and the associated assumptions that are used in their work. Questions practitioners should ask prior to and during a project include: Are definitions of key concepts included? Have key concepts been translated into clear outcomes? Do all stakeholders understand the outcome goals and how they will be achieved? Researchers should also think carefully about sustainability and the importance of the definitions provided to those involved in a project. Research should make use of the language and terminology employed during the program. Clear and applicable definitions limit the possibility for misunderstandings and extrapolations from what was truly meant to occur during the course of a project. When the goals of a project, such as program sustainability, are concretely defined and translated to all involved stakeholders, evaluating the degree to which it is achieved will be easier and more effective.

This paper has added an important link to the existing chain of evidence regarding program sustainability. We know the importance of sustainability as a concept, but until now, we did not have an account of how those stakeholders involved might personalize the meaning of sustainability. This paper has demonstrated that while it is important to clearly define key concepts, defining them is not enough. The meaning of important terms and concepts must be translated to all stakeholders involved in order to allow sustainability to best succeed.

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RÉSUMÉ

Objectifs : La durabilité est un résultat fort souhaité des programmes de promotion de la santé; pourtant, il échappe souvent aux planificateurs de programme qui cherchent à l'atteindre. Cette étude vise à découvrir comment l'objectif qu'est la durabilité d'un programme est interprété par les intervenants clés de trois sites de démonstration de programmes de prévention des chutes.

Méthode : Nous avons mené des entrevues semi-structurées auprès d'intervenants clés participant à un large éventail d'initiatives de programme dans le cadre d'une plus grande étude sur la durabilité des programmes, laquelle s'appuyait sur la méthodologie utilisée pour l'étude de cas multiples, sur une période de financement de deux ans.

Résultats : Au total, 40 participants provenant des trois sites ont présenté des définitions de ce qu'est la durabilité. La plupart des intervenants ont signalé qu'il fallait conserver une version du programme général de prévention des chutes. Quelques intervenants ont signalé qu'il fallait conserver les bons éléments ou les solutions aux objectifs du programme. Les suggestions les plus communes présentées par les intervenants concernant la façon d'atteindre la durabilité étaient la sensibilisation accrue et l'obtention de nouvelles sources de financement. Même si un grand nombre d'éléments clés ont été soulevés, nous avons observé d'importantes différences dans les définitions de la durabilité présentées par les intervenants, tant à l'intérieur des sites de démonstration qu'entre ceux-ci.

Conclusion : Cette recherche donne des éclaircissements sur les significations uniques de la durabilité aux yeux des différents intervenants dans le cadre de leur participation à un programme de prévention des chutes. L'éventail de définitions fournies par les intervenants démontre la mesure dans laquelle les efforts de ces personnes peuvent être fragmentés et, par conséquent, moins efficaces en ce qui a trait à l'atteinte de l'objectif final que représente la durabilité du programme si l'équipe de projet ne travaille pas en respectant la même définition que celle de l'objectif.

Mots clés : durabilité du programme, chutes accidentelles, promotion de la santé