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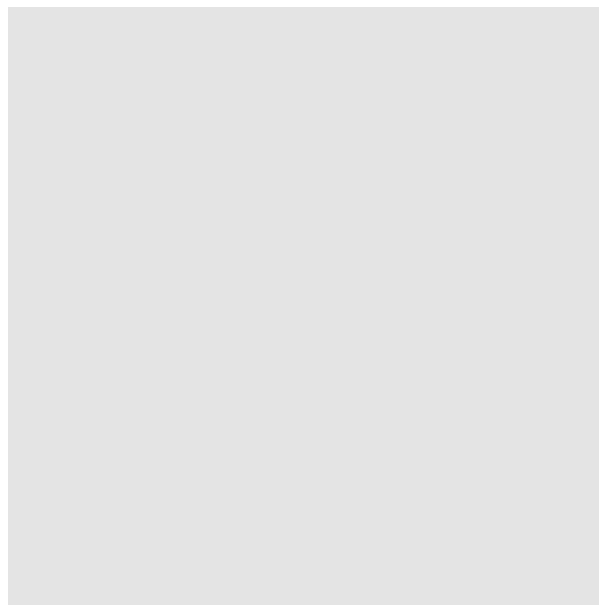
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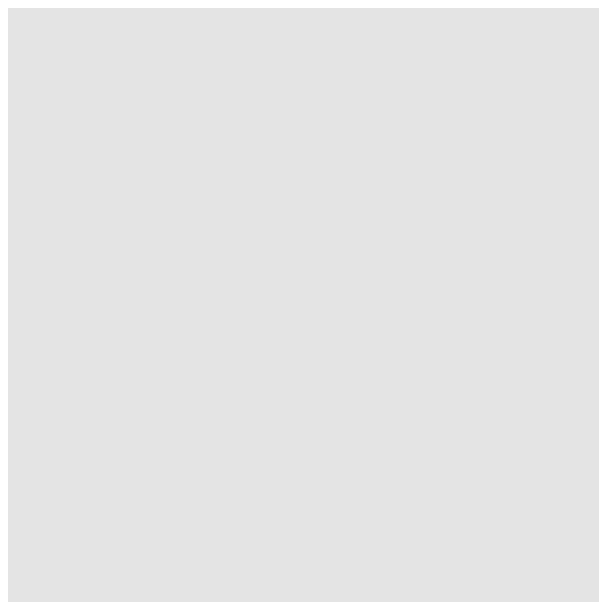
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WKU Bingocize program receives \$400,000 NIH grant

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Jason Crandall



Matthew Shake
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A Western Kentucky University program that blends exercise and bingo for the elderly is heading into a clinical trial thanks to a grant topping \$400,000 from the National Institutes of Health.

“We’re just excited. It’s been a long, hard road to get it,” said Jason Crandall, the WKU professor who invented the program called Bingocize.

Crandall, now an associate professor of exercise science and kinesiology at WKU, first came up with the idea while launching an exercise program at an Owensboro assisted living facility as a faculty member at Kentucky Wesleyan College.

But when Crandall and his students showed up to launch the program one day, their plans were thwarted by the facility’s regular bingo game. Then it hit him: Why not combine the two?

After checking the research on such a program and finding none, Crandall began developing the program, which integrates low to moderate exercises into a regular bingo game.

The program typically involves an exercise instructor guiding participants through exercises as they play bingo. It’s been shown to have research-tested improvements to physical health, cognitive skills and social engagement.

The grant, totaling \$417,398, is from the National Institute on Aging at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, according to an announcement from the Office of U.S. Rep. Brett Guthrie, R-Bowling Green.

Crandall said the grant will be used to test the program’s mobile app version at senior centers in Tennessee and Kentucky. Over the course of 12 weeks for twice a week, participants will work through a session as a group.



While Crandall tests for improvement in participants' balance, grip strength and other physical abilities, psychological sciences professor Matthew Shake will look for improvements in cognitive ability. WKU students will also assist with the trial.

“The idea here is to get older adults to be more physically active,” said Shake, adding that older adults know they need to exercise but don't choose to.

The program breaks through some of those hang-ups with a program that's fun and social.

“It's approachable. It's more entertaining. ... That's what we're trying to do,” he said.

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MORE INFORMATION

Funds approved for Bingocize implementation in 20 Kentucky nursing homes

Aaron Mudd

Education reporter. Covers education and related issues, focusing primarily on the Bowling Green and Warren County public school districts and Western Kentucky University.