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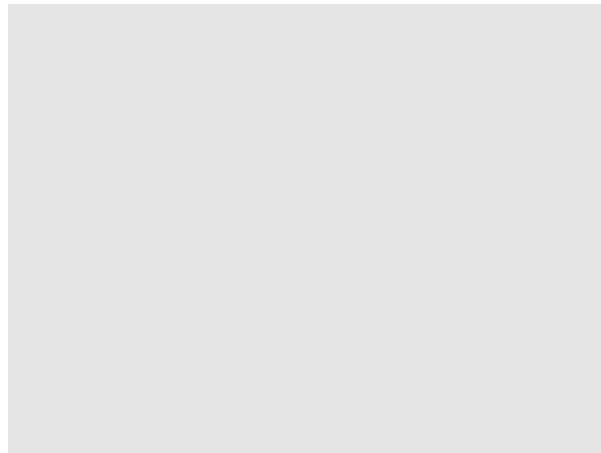
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WKU's Bingocize program seeks participants as it prepares for study this fall

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Jason Crandall

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The idea to blend bingo and exercise for the elderly first came to Western Kentucky University professor Jason Crandall as if by serendipity.

Crandall, an exercise science and kinesiology professor, recalls the day he planned to launch an exercise program at an assisted living facility in Owensboro – only to have it disrupted by the facility’s regular bingo game.

Then it dawned on him: Why not combine the two?

Now, after securing a \$400,000 research grant from the National Institutes of Health last year, WKU's Bingocize program has entered a clinical trial and is seeking participants for a study beginning this fall.

"This particular trial is helping us to further develop our mobile app," said Kristeen Owens, manager of WKU's Center for Applied Science in Health and Aging, which oversees Bingocize.

Beginning in August, researchers are seeking participants to stop by for one-hour Bingocize sessions twice a week over the course of 12 weeks. Researchers will also conduct pre- and post-tests to document changes in the participants' health.

In exchange for participating in the tests and completing at least 19 sessions, participants will receive \$40 and the chance to win \$100. Prizes will also be up for grabs each week for Bingocize winners, with multiple chances to win.

The program typically involves an instructor guiding participants through low to moderate exercises integrated into a bingo game.

So far, it's been shown to have research-tested improvements to physical health, cognitive skills and social engagement, but researchers are still testing the game's mobile app version, Owens said.

Crandall first came up with the idea when he was a faculty member at Kentucky Wesleyan College. Since that time, however, he's developed it at WKU and it's helping boost the university's profile across the country, he said.



The Center for Applied Science in Health and Aging largely grew out of Bingocize, Crandall said, adding it now boasts 12 faculty members representing different subject areas, such as suicides among the elderly, along with their cognitive aging and physical function.

Along with further researching the program's health benefits, Crandall said it could help WKU further commercialize Bingocize. A non-app version is already licensed in 20 states and four countries, he said.

“That just continues to grow,” Crandall said.

Those interested in participating in the study should contact Owens, manager of CASHA, at kristeen.tice-owens@wku.edu.

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