The “Hook” for Prevention

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Purpose of The “Hook”

• Something to get people interested in and sticking with an activity that is not obviously a health-related activity but that has health-related consequences
Possible Hooks

- Generativity
- Intergenerational volunteer activity
- Local community empowerment
- Opportunities to socialize
Program Example

• Experience Corps
  – In Baltimore, we have a program in which older adults volunteer in public elementary schools

• 15 hours per week minimum
• Sign up for the whole academic year
• Performing meaningful cognitive tasks
• Socialization element
• Generativity element
• Improve physical health as well
  • Original Principle Investigator: Linda Fried
  • Current PI: George Rebok
  • Funding from sources including NIA, MacArthur Foundation, Abell Foundation, and others
Preventive Aspects for Older Adults

- Physical health
- Cognitive health
- Social health
- Combination is expected to lead to compression of morbidity
Preventive Aspects for Children

• Cognitive activities for older adults involve educating, tutoring, and managing behavior of young children
• Children will be better educated and have potentially better health outcomes
Other Aspects of the “Hook”

• There is a small stipend given to volunteers
• Many older adults have expressed an interest in continuing their participation even when the funds for stipends run out
• Resource allocation for this type of program has been decentralized in the Baltimore City School system
  – Principals have been willing to put up their own school’s money to support the program
End Result

• Evidence of willingness of older adults to invest in activities for prevention in their own lives and for prevention in the lives of the children and of the community
• The community has been willing to invest the resources in prevention relevant to both older adults and children
• The key is to package the prevention as something else
  – Focus on others rather than on self