The importance of participating in regular exercise regardless of age is now widely recognised and well supported by research [1, 2]. A strength and balance program termed Agestrong already exists at many sites across Peninsula Health. Given the popularity of Agestrong and the low rate (20%) of local Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs) who offer exercise programs, we hypothesised that Agestrong would be suitable in this setting.

Thirty-eight low level RACFs were invited to participate and 11 accepted. Nine successfully continued exercise classes for three months (Fig 2). An average of 10 residents (range 4-20) attended these classes (Fig 3) and reported enjoyment and benefit from the exercise. Barriers identified by unwilling facilities included lack of financial support and commitment from management.

While initial interest was low, our results demonstrate that Agestrong was welcome, incorporated and sustained by a small number of facilities and wider interest has now been received. Further research is needed to determine the measurable benefits of regular exercise in this frail and functionally compromised population in order to persuade stakeholders and providers.

References

Acknowledgements
We would like to express our gratitude to the Peninsula GP network (Aged Care Stream) for their support and to the participating facilities.