Q.2. Communicating study outcomes

The Role of Civic Engagement for Men’s Health and Well Being in Norway—A Contribution to Public Health
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Objectives: Using the example of older men volunteering on teams that restore historic ships, this article examines the effects of volunteering on the well-being of older adults. We consider particularly how volunteering impacts levels of social engagement and explore how the men’s reminiscences as they bond with their fellows in highly skilled work helps integrate their life experiences.

Methods
Data are based on 14 in-depth interviews with volunteers working on historic vessels in Norway. Self-rated health, functional dependency, and well-being measures were collected using semi-structured questionnaire.

Results
Volunteering in a context of skilled, group-bonded, culturally prestigious activity adds considerably to social capital among elderly men in Norway. Respondents explain their involvement in terms of prior relationships and current social benefits. They spoke of the value of maintaining past personal connections to a particular ship, shipping company, or local community. These were reinforced by current social benefits, such as the experience of companionship, unity, and the feeling of making...
an important contribution to the society. The group dynamics and strong collective aspect of these voluntary associations maintains internal cohesion, and members only leave when forced by increasing age, poor health, or insufficient financial resources.

Conclusions
This article illuminates a case study of gender-specific engagement of older adults in volunteer roles returning high benefits both to participants and society, and adds knowledge to public-health programs and policies in the volunteer- and cultural-heritage sector.

Key message
• Volunteering returns high benefits for the elderly himself and society.