

Effect of a Workplace Weight-Loss Program for Overweight and Obese Healthcare Workers

Interventions to promote healthy lifestyles are often implemented in the workplace, an ideal setting as the 'majority of an employee's time is spent at work'. Wellness programs in the work environment can reduce employee absenteeism, reducing indirect/direct health costs incurred, and preventing NCDs through enhanced health and wellbeing. In turn, identifying 'a workplace program that effectively addresses modifiable factors to reduce the risk of obesity and chronic diseases' for healthcare workers is a priority.

This study assessed the success of the 16-week 'Better Living' program delivered in the United States of America (USA). The influence of the intervention on weight, changes in metabolic health, and on lifestyle factors such as physical activity (PA) were monitored. 41 participants were recruited across 3 hospitals, 21 clinics, and a nursing and allied health college in Nebraska to take part in the study. The employees engaged in weekly educational sessions on nutrition and PA. Moreover, social support groups and meetings with weight loss-experts were coordinated based on the individual needs of participants, and to set goals that could be assessed post-intervention.

The results were more reassuring than previous studies. Participants achieved 'an average of 5.6% weight loss' post-intervention. Indicators of BMI, sleep quality, and depression also improved. When considering lifestyle behaviours, participants 'increased weekly MET minutes of physical activity as well as exercise-related behaviors such as participating in <30 minutes of physical activity and a specific exercise session during the week'.

Implementing weight loss programs that do not 'individualize decision making', and that prioritize long-term follow-up to sustain weight loss and shifts in lifestyle behaviours should be prioritised. This will 'benefit employees working in healthcare settings and are crucially needed for this population'.

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