

Sports settings may help engage Australian men in weight loss

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Men in Australia are more likely than women to be obese, yet they are underrepresented in weight loss trials. A study published in *PLOS Medicine*, by Eleanor Quested at Curtin University in Perth, Australia

and colleagues found that participants in a men-only, sports-themed weight loss program increased physical activity and lost more weight than men who had not participated, suggesting that men with overweight and obesity may benefit from similarly designed programs.

To understand the feasibility and efficacy of this sports-themed [weight loss](#) program targeted towards men, researchers recruited 130 men with overweight or obesity between the ages of 35-65. The participants were then randomly assigned to either a [control group](#) or a group that took part in the [weight loss](#) intervention of 12 weekly 90 minute sessions designed to promote [physical activity](#), healthy eating, and weight loss. While results suggest the intervention group had greater weight loss, the study was limited by the lack of data on individual session attendance, a high number of participants unreachable when contacted for follow-up on post-study results, and an unrepresentative sample comprised mostly of men of White ethnicity.

Research suggests that sports programs may be an effective way to engage men in physical activity and weight loss, yet few studies have analysed the feasibility and efficacy of implementing these programs. The current study's preliminary cost effectiveness evaluation suggests that the program they piloted may be inexpensive, cost-effective, and associated with increased physical activity and weight loss among participants.

According to the authors, "The pilot findings may be generalizable to delivery of the intervention in other professional sport settings in Australia, and broader implementation may be better achieved by capitalising on roll outs of the program in lower-level state-based leagues, and via adaptations to other sports".

More information: Kwasnicka D, Ntoumanis N, Hunt K, Gray CM, Newton RU, Gucciardi DF, et al. (2020) A gender-sensitised weight-loss

and healthy living program for men with overweight and obesity in Australian Football League settings (Aussie-FIT): A pilot randomised controlled trial. *PLoS Med* 17(8): e1003136.

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