

Tackling Male Obesity: the ROMEO (Review Of MEn and Obesity) study

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Abstract

Background: Male obesity is particularly problematic in that men are less likely than women to realise they have a weight problem and are also less likely to engage in weight reduction programmes. Little is known about the most effective ways to engage obese men with obesity services in order to manage weight loss successfully.

Aim: Funded by the National Institute of Health Research Health Technology Assessment Programme, the ROMEO (Review Of MEn and Obesity) project is an on-going integrated series of five quantitative and qualitative systematic reviews of the evidence associated with management strategies for treating obesity in men, and how to engage men in these obesity services

Methods: Studies included in the review are men 16 years or over, with no upper age limit. Ideally all groups of participants in studies must have a mean or median BMI of 30kg/m². However, in most qualitative papers, BMI is not clearly stated.

We are aiming to find out not only 'what works' for men in terms of weight management, but also 'for which men, and under what circumstances'. Our pragmatic approach to this mixed methods evidence synthesis is informed by methods such as realist synthesis, thematic synthesis, framework synthesis, and analytical approaches developed from methods of inquiry such as grounded theory.

Findings: We will present initial findings from the qualitative arm of the project.

Conclusions: Our work will identify the existing evidence with which to develop guidance for the NHS on the subject of men and obesity management. The individual reviews and integrated report will also provide guidance on whether further research is needed to develop better methods for engaging and retaining men in obesity interventions.