

Regional Platform for Health and Wellbeing pilot study: provision of online weight management support via the workplace



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Introduction

The workplace presents an opportunity for improving health and wellbeing, including supporting employees with their weight management. The East Midlands Platform for Health and Wellbeing is a unique regional network of private, public and voluntary sector organisations working to improve health and reduce obesity. Member organisations commit to actions that improve the health and wellbeing of employees, individuals and/or communities. As part of Slimming World's commitment to the platform, and building on a previous workplace group-based weight management study (Lavin *et al*, 2013), this pilot assessed the merits of providing online weight management support via the workplace at a large regional employer.

Methods

73 Nottingham City Council employees were offered 12 weeks' weight management support with Slimming World's online programme. The programme allows unlimited access to behaviour change support around diet and physical activity and requests a once weekly weigh-in. Weight change was self-reported weekly using Slimming World calibrated scales placed within each worksite. Dietary and physical activity behaviours, along with aspects of psychological wellbeing were assessed by questionnaires pre-and post-programme.

Results

57 participants (meeting inclusion criteria) took part in the trial and were included within the analysis. 16 employees were excluded from the analysis due to; non completion of baseline questionnaire, not being able/did not wish to join the online programme, requesting to be removed, or because they did not submit any weight changes.

Weight change and online participation: Mean (SD) joining BMI was 35.3 (5.9) kg/m². 44 participants (77%) were classed as completing the programme (logged into the online programme and submitted at least 1 weight change within the final 4 weeks).

Table 1: Weight and weekly online weight reporting of participants enrolled in the 12 week programme

	All participants (n=57)	Completers (n=44)
Average weekly online weigh-in (weeks)	8.2 (3.2)	9.5 (2.3)
Weight change (kg)	-3.6 (3.1)	-4.2 (3.2)
BMI change (kg/m ²)	-1.4 (1.1)	-1.6 (1.2)
Weight change (%)	-3.9 (3.3)	-4.5 (3.4)

All p-values <.001

Reference

Lavin, J, Barber, J, Middleton, G, Henderson, H, and Keegan, R. (2013). Regional platform for Health and Wellbeing pilot study: provision of weight management support via the workplace. *Obesity Facts*, 6(1):197

Behaviour change: Participants who completed both pre-and post-programme questionnaires (n=43) reported positive changes in dietary and physical activity behaviours (Figure 1) (all p<.001), and psychological health (Figure 2) (mental wellbeing, self-worth and self-esteem, all p<.001).

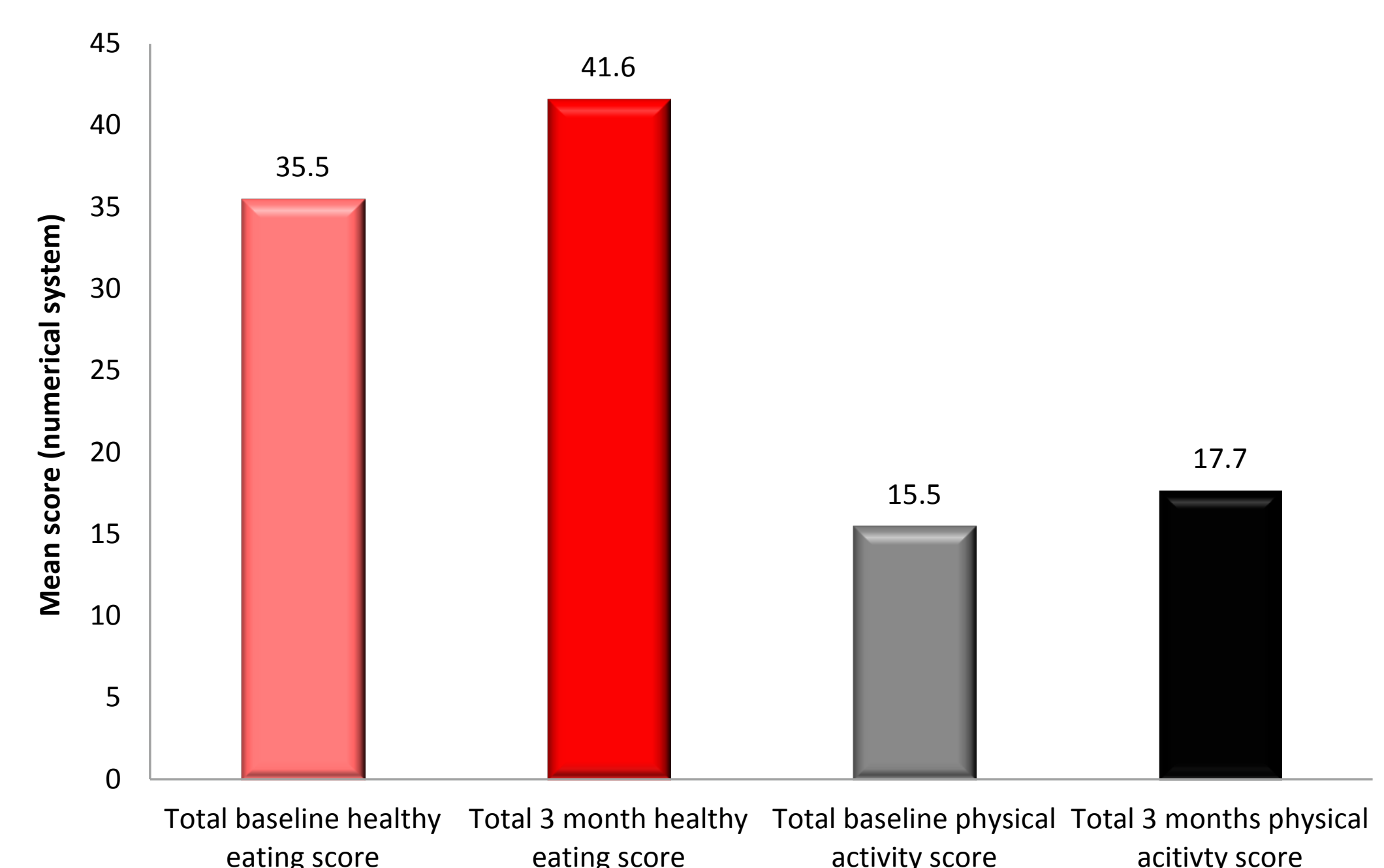


Figure 1: Total healthy eating and physical activity scores pre-and post-programme. *N.B. Responses to questions on diet (eating take-away/junk food, eating unhealthy snacks, eating the recommended 5-a-day fruit and vegetables, cooking meals from scratch and eating a large variety of foods were combined to give a total healthy eating score. Responses to physical activity questions (watching TV, avoidance of strenuous or moderate activity, going out for walks a lot and walking during everyday activities) were combined to give a total physical activity score.*

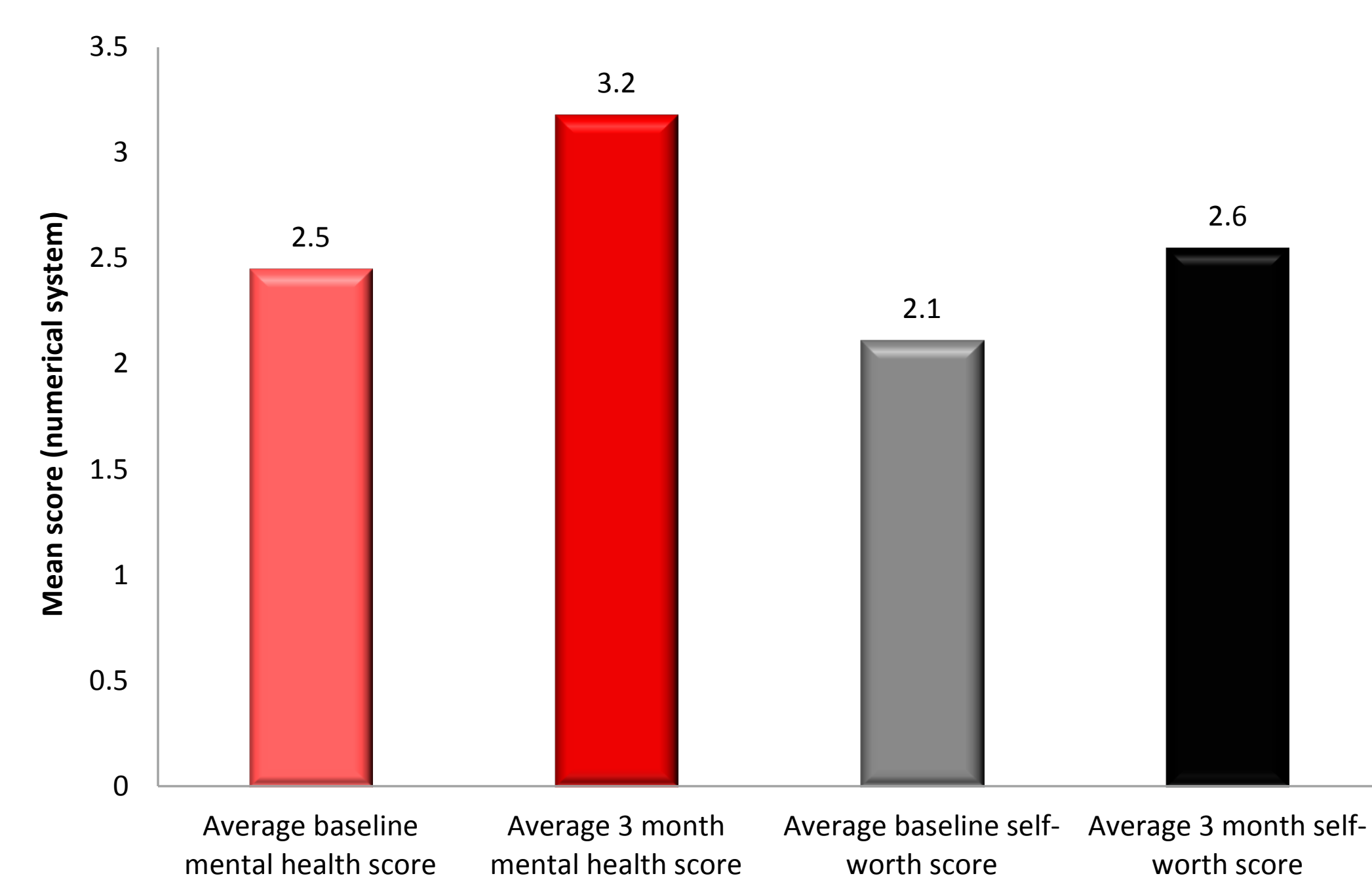


Figure 2: Average mental health and self-worth scores pre-and post-programme

Conclusion

Providing online weight management support via the workplace resulted in individuals achieving significant weight loss (-3.9%). Those who completed the programme and both pre-and post-programme questionnaires showed positive changes in behavioural outcomes, including healthy eating and physical activity habits, and psychological wellbeing, which may impact on working life. These results suggest that the Slimming World online weight management programme could be a practical option within workplace health and wellbeing programmes.