TACSM Abstract

Predictors of Employee Adherence to Worksite Weight Loss Exercise and Nutrition Program

BRITTANY CRIM AND JOHN B. BARTHOLOMEW

The University of Texas at Austin

ABSTRACT

Worksite wellness programs (WWP) are becoming a popular means of addressing the obesity epidemic due to their convenience and potential benefit to insurance costs. Unfortunately, few have been evaluated. GET FIT (GF) is a theory-based, worksite exercise and nutrition program that is designed to prevent and treat obesity. Adherence is the primary predictor of success to a weight loss program. This study was designed to identify predictors of: adherence to GF; and weight loss in conjunction with GF. Data was collected for 175 participants (n = 133 female). The mean age was 44.21 yrs. (+/-12.04). Body weight and body fat % were measured by scale and dual energy x-ray absorpitometry (DEXA) within two weeks of program onset and conclusion. The baseline mean body weight was 184.47 lbs (+/- 40.36) and body fat % was 40.19 (+/- 7.64), with 68% of participants obese due to a body fat % greater than 28% for males and 40% for females. Before beginning, participants completed a three surveys: (1) body satisfaction, (2) exercise, nutrition, and program self-efficacy, and (3) family and friend social support. GF staff recorded attendance for the exercise (3 d/wk) and nutrition (1 d/wk) sessions. Average exercise attendance was 61% (+/- 24) and the average nutrition education attendance was 24% (+/-29). The mean change in weight was -4.42 lbs (+/- 6.95) and the mean change in body fat was -1.88% (+/-2.11). Bi-variate correlations were used to identify significant relationships. Weight change was correlated with exercise attendance ($r = -.22$, $p<.05$), nutrition attendance ($r= -.24$, $p<.05$), and body satisfaction ($r= .26$, $p<.01$). Exercise attendance was correlated with nutrition attendance ($r = .36$, $p<.001$). None of the psychological constructs were significantly associated with attendance to either program. Overall, the GET FIT program was successful; with a significant 12-wk weight loss of 4.4 lbs. Attendance at exercise sessions was relatively strong. Attendance at the nutritional sessions was less successful. Surprisingly, neither of these values was associated with their self-efficacy ratings. Despite this, adherence to both the exercise and nutrition sessions was a significant predictor of weight loss. Future research must be conducted to examine maintenance of the weight loss.