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This is the author's version of a work that was submitted/accepted for publication in the following source:

Harrison, M., [Vidgen, H.A.](#), Muller, S., [Gallegos, D.](#), & Madden, S.
(2016)

Positive impact telephone counselling service effective in changing health behaviours and body mass index. In

Dietitians Association of Australia 33rd National Conference, 19-21 May 2016, Melbourne, Vic.

This file was downloaded from: <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/103683/>

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POSITIVE IMPACT TELEPHONE COUNSELLING SERVICE EFFECTIVE IN CHANGING HEALTH BEHAVIOURS AND BODY MASS INDEX

Harrison M, Vidgen H, Muller S, Gallegos D & Madden S.

Positive Impact was a healthy lifestyle telephone counselling service staffed by dietitians and delivered through the Greater Metro Brisbane South Medicare Local (now Primary Health Network). The program has existed in various forms and funders since 2008. The service comprised of weekly phone calls over a 12 month period. In 2013, a six month option was also made available. Clients were referred by their general practitioner who remained engaged throughout the program. Demographic, eating and physical activity behaviour data was collected by counsellors. Measured anthropometric and biochemical data was collected by the general practitioner. Data was collected at enrolment (assessment 1), mid program (assessment 2), end of program (assessment 3) and six months post program (assessment 4). Data was available on 327 clients who had completed the program. At assessment 3, the mean BMI had decreased from 35.8 kg/m² (sd= 6.4) to 33.9 kg/m² (sd= 6.1) (n=360, p<0.0001). This was maintained six months after the program (BMI= 33.6 kg/m², sd= 5.8, n=136, p<0.0001). Significant changes at assessment four were also found in fruit and vegetable intake, physical activity and sedentary time. Improvements were made in total cholesterol, fasting blood sugar levels and triglycerides however these failed to reach statistical significance. The Positive Impact Program has demonstrated its effectiveness in changing health behaviours and outcomes for clients who complete it. Client retention remains an ongoing challenge.