

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

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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 absorptometry (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). Bivariate 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.