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### A Pilot Weight Loss Program for Parents of Children with a Disability

Julia L. Depuy, Payson A. Wisniewski, Olivia R. Garrison, Cassandra W. Kim, and Gerald J. Jerome, FACSM, Towson University, Towson MD 21252

Obesity is a significant public health issue for both adults and children. Lifestyle approaches to weight management that include changes to diet and physical activity are effective for both adults and children. Research indicates that parental weight loss is associated with child weight loss. Therefore, a parent focused approach to supporting healthy weight in children could benefit children with disabilities who are excluded or lack access to health promotion programs. Adaptable weight loss programs are needed to support parents with varying child-care responsibilities. **PURPOSE:** This pilot study evaluates a 12-week, evidence-based weight loss program for parents of children with a disability. The main outcome was parental weight loss, and a secondary outcome was parent adherence with coaching sessions. **METHODS:** Participants were  $\geq 18$  years old with a child (8-18 years) who had a disability. Inclusion criteria for the parent included BMI  $\geq 25$ , internet access, and willingness to participate in a lifestyle-based weight loss program. Participants were offered program materials, tailored weekly emails, and weekly video coaching from trained undergraduate students. The 12-week weight loss program included recommendations for calorie reduction, increased physical activity, regular self-weighing, and self-monitoring of these activities. The study was conducted remotely. Weight was assessed at baseline and 12 weeks using study scales that transmit data using cellular technology. Participants provided weights on 3 days during a 7-day period. Staff verified the weights with the participants, and the 3-day average was used in analyses. Compliance with weekly coach calls, weight monitoring, diet tracking and physical activity was also tracked. A Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used to examine changes in weight. **RESULTS:** The participants (n=13) were female, predominately Non-Hispanic White (77%) with an average age of 46 years and BMI of 35. The average weight loss was 2.9(SD = 2.8, p = .006) kgs or 3.2% (SD = 3.2, p = .005) of baseline weight. Participants completed 89% of the weekly coaching sessions and 62% achieved the study goal of 5-pound weight loss. **CONCLUSION:** A remote delivered weight loss program using student coaches appears effective in supporting weight loss among parents of children with a disability.

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