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Effectiveness of a Sliming Program for the Public

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Introduction:

Recent studies show that in Hong Kong, 20.1% of men and 15.9% of women are overweight, and 22.3% of men and 20.0% of women are obese. Lifestyles like dietary intake and physical exercise have direct bearing on body fitness. However, many people have a misconception about obesity management. Thus, education should be provided.

Purpose:

The purpose of the program is to i) increase the awareness of the knowledge in dietary intake, exercise, and pharmacological knowledge for the participants, ii) to assess the change of the health belief and self-efficacy after a year of structured education program on weight reduction and iii) to promote the concept of self care in four behavioral patterns including regular exercise, regular weight watching, low-fat, low-calorie diet and monitoring of food intake.

Methods:

Each program was composed of 3 lectures - diet, drugs for weight reduction and exercises. Participants were all general public. Health check including fat analysis, BMI, waist-hip ratio and blood pressure were measured at each lecture. Dietary follow-up, exercise class, cooking competition and trail walking were organized. Ongoing contact with health professionals including nurses, doctors, dietitian and pharmacists helped monitoring changes and lapses, provided opportunities to adjust strategy. "Pre-test" and "Post-test" questionnaire survey was employed. After the completion of the program, a self-reported current weight was obtained.

Results:

From April 2005 to April 2006, 123 subjects were studied, 95% of whom were female. A majority, of 78 participants (56 of them had BMI over 23), had attended all three lectures. Results were encouraging - 65% had reduced fat percentage, 62% had lower BMI and 41% had reduced waist-hip ratio after attending the three lectures and dietary follow-up. The mean weight (kg) fell from (65.5+/- 8.6) at the baseline to (62.2+/- 8.0) after one year. Significant correlation was found between support by family members and the successful weight maintenance.

Conclusion:

This structured education program with the collaboration of different health care professionals or support group could increase their awareness on weight reduction, modifying the behavior of the participants with a significant amount of lost weight, maintaining motivation for the continuity of self care, providing encouragement and protecting against relapse. In long term, more people change the attitude and behavior on weight reduction would prevent the many diseases and finally lower the medical burden from the government. This program was successful and it will be re-organized from September 2006 to January 2007.