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Successful weight management in an underserved population through the Group Lifestyle Balance (GLB) program

Background: Weight management strategies have been comparatively less successful in individuals from low socio-economic status (SES) communities which are medically under-served. We explored the weight management effectiveness of Group Life Balance, (GLB) a strategy adapted from University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health and applied at the Diabetes Health Wellness Institute, a population health initiative of Baylor Scott and White Health which operates in a low SES community of Dallas, Texas.

Methods: The GLB program emphasizes incorporating small, sustainable changes into the lives of participants to build self-efficacy and encourage them to leverage aspects of their current lifestyle toward healthy behaviors. The program does not specify a given “diet” but instead emphasizes a daily fat gram budget which participants manage within their current eating patterns. The program also emphasizes incorporation into their current lifestyle incremental that increases in physical activity of their choice to a weekly goal of 150 minutes. Tools such as food and activity log assist participants to achieve these goals over 3-month duration.

Results: The GLB program participants experienced an average 5.1% weight loss with an attrition rate of only 8%. Program participation was also associated with improved healthy behaviors of the family of participants.

Conclusions: In this low SES population, the GLB program with its emphasis on incremental changes in current lifestyles of participants toward healthy behaviors appears to be an effective weight management strategy for them and appears to improve healthy behaviors of their families as a collateral benefit.

Biography

Donald E Wesson, MD, FACP is currently Professor of Medicine and the Vice Dean of Texas A&M University College of Medicine in Temple, Texas. Prior to this position, he was the SC Arnett Professor of Medicine and Chairman of the Department of Internal Medicine and Physiology at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center and had been Associate Professor of Medicine at the Baylor College of Medicine where he was Assistant Chief of the Nephrology Section at the Houston VA Hospital. He received his undergraduate degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He earned his Medical degree from Washington University School of Medicine and completed his Residency and Internship at Baylor College of Medicine. He is the recipient of multiple Teaching Awards at Baylor and Texas Tech.

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