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Title

Recruitment and characteristics of men with overweight/obesity from a trial of a gender-sensitized healthy lifestyle program

Priority 1 (Research Category)

Men's health

Presenters

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Abstract

Context: Engaging men in chronic disease prevention is critical as rates of obesity in men continue to increase, coupled with men being less likely to proactively seek preventative health care services. Objective: To report on the recruitment and baseline characteristics of a healthy lifestyle program using the power of sport (hockey) to engage men. Study Design and Analysis: Cluster randomized controlled trial where 42 sites were randomly assigned to either the intervention or wait-list control group. The intervention group received the Hockey Fans in Training (Hockey FIT) program (3-month active phase; 9-month minimally-supported phase) while the control group continued with usual activities for 12 months. Setting: Sites were located across 40 cities in Canada and the U.S., selected based on the availability/interest of both a local major junior/professional hockey team and an implementation partner. Population Studied: Men aged 35-65 years with a body mass index (BMI) ≥ 27 kg/m² and who were fans of the local hockey team. Participants were recruited through the hockey team (i.e., social media, email blasts, website) and using other traditional recruitment methods. Intervention: Hockey FIT is a gender-sensitized, off-ice, healthy lifestyle program, designed to appeal to hockey fans through support from their local team and based on men's preferences (e.g., group-based competition, humour, being with like-minded and -sized men). Outcome Measures: In-person assessments (weight, height, waist circumference, blood pressure, glycated hemoglobin, fitness) and online questionnaires (physical activity, sedentary time, healthy eating, health-related quality of life, and demographics) were completed at baseline, 3, and 12 months. Accelerometry-based step counters were also used to measure steps over 7 days at each time point. Results: 1,397 individuals were assessed for eligibility and 997 men were enrolled. Most participants heard about Hockey FIT through social media and team email blasts (41% and 29%, respectively). Participants averaged 48.6 years of age (± 8.3 SD), had mean BMI values of 35.3 kg/m² (± 6.1), were predominately white, and had varying levels of education. Conclusions: By partnering with local hockey teams, we were able to engage men in a healthy lifestyle

program. While participants were among the target audience intended for the study, targeted recruitment is needed to attract more diverse populations.