Individual vs. Group-based Strategies for Weight Loss and Management in Adults: Pen-Profile Perspectives

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Title: Individual vs. Group-based Strategies for Weight Loss and Management in Adults: Pen-Profile Perspectives.

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INTRODUCTION

Obesity and overweightness are major public health concerns, particularly due to the association between non-communicable diseases and all-cause mortality. Furthermore, the financial burden imposed on the National Health Services, and wider society, because of overweightness is estimated at £27 billion. Despite the numerous support systems for potential weight loss, the advocating of group-based strategies has grown, yet inter-individual preferences and perceptions of weight-management strategies are less well known. The aim of this study was to explore perceptions of barriers, facilitators, strategies and successes to individual vs. group-based weight management programmes in overweight adults.

METHODS

A convenience sample of forty-two overweight (Body Mass Index ≥ 25-kg.m2) participants (aged 32-63y) volunteered to take part in this study. All participants subsequently completed a 3-month weight loss programme, dichotomised to a group-based (n=21), or self-monitoring (n=21) approach, respectively. At the conclusion of the 3-month period, all participants participated in a semi-structured interview (60±7 mins) to explore individual perceptions of barriers, facilitators, strategies and successes. Qualitative data were analysed using pen profiles, which were constructed from verbatim transcripts.

RESULTS

Convergent themes were found for individual and group strategies for facilitators (organisation and influence of cooking skills), strategies (freedom, enjoyment, and ease) and successes (self-control, health improvement and weight-loss). Divergent themes emerged between groups for barriers, group participants highlighted expense of commercial products, and knowledge of nutrition and dieting, whilst individual participants reported (lack of) social support from peers, (lack of) motivation, and occupation.

CONCLUSION

Whilst facilitators, strategies and successes related to individual vs group weight-loss approaches were comparable, divergent perceived barriers emerged. Therefore, it is recommended that key stakeholders, facilitators and individuals must consider these factors prior to the advocation any one-particular weight loss strategy.

CONTRIBUTIONS

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