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‘Take 5’ – a weight loss intervention for adults with intellectual disabilities and obesity

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People with intellectual disabilities (ID) have a higher level of unmet health needs than the general population and they are more disadvantaged in relation to access to nutrition and preventative health-care services⁽¹⁾. Many studies⁽²⁾ have reported that the prevalence of obesity is higher in people with ID than the general population. Clinical guidelines^(3,4) on the management of obesity recommend multicomponent interventions for weight loss that use behavioural principles to support dietary change and increase levels of physical activity (PA). To date, there is scant data to examine the effectiveness of weight management interventions in those with ID and obesity. This study examined the effectiveness of a structured multicomponent weight loss intervention.

An existing weight management intervention (Glasgow and Clyde Weight Management Service) was adapted to the cognitive needs of adults with ID and carers supporting the participants were encouraged to be involved. The multicomponent intervention consisted of 9 individual sessions and included a personalised diet with a 2510/d kJ (600 kcal) deficit and behavioural techniques to promote increased PA levels and healthy dietary patterns. Anthropometric measurements of height, weight, waist circumference were made at baseline and at 6-month follow-up. PA levels were assessed pre- and post intervention using ActiGraph accelerometers, model GT1M (Actigraph, Pensacola, FL, USA).

Fifty four obese (BMI ≥ 30 kg/m²) adults (≥ 18 years old) with ID were recruited in this study. A total of 47 (87%) participants (mean BMI 41, sd 7.9 kg/m²) completed the intervention. A significant and clinically important weight reduction was observed ($P < 0.05$) after 6 months. Approximately 50% of the participants lost 5% or more of their initial body weight. Initial accelerometer measurements indicated high levels of inactivity and low levels of moderate to vigorous activity.

A multicomponent weight loss intervention is effective in promoting weight loss in adults with ID.

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4. Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (2010) *Management of Obesity: A National Clinical Guideline*. Guideline No. 115. Edinburgh. SIGN. ISBN 978 1 905813 57 5.