
CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

An integrated approach to preventing and managing overweight and obesity within the City of Cockburn

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Introduction: Though the connection between overweight and obesity and ill-health is well recognised, its prevention and management is not well understood. The City of Cockburn faces an overweight and obesity crises, with 79% of those aged 16 year and over either overweight (46.1%) or obese (32.9%) compared with 67% of adults Australia-wide. (1)

Cockburn Integrated Health commenced an audit of existing programs and services focused on overweight and obesity operating within the City of Cockburn and identified a broad range of service providers from local to federal government initiatives to private practitioners. Nevertheless, there was an absence of integrated, affordable, person-centred and ongoing care.

Practice change implemented: Service provider and community consultation identified that what was required was an integrated service model that provided ongoing support to clients and access to a wide range of program options.

Aim and theory of change: The Cockburn Healthy Lifestyle Program (CHLP) was founded to assist clients to choose healthy lifestyle behaviors that promote the maintenance or attainment of a healthy weight. A designated coordinator recruits clients, collaborates with service providers to form referral pathways and mobilizes primary health providers to ensure referral pathways are utilized according to individual client's needs. Clients are given access to regular health assessments during which their progress is evaluated and are referred to a range of low cost programs. It is theorized this approach will prove an effective measure for preventing and managing overweight and obesity.

Targeted population and stakeholders: City of Cockburn residents of all ages are eligible. Particular effort is made to attract participants from vulnerable, hard to reach communities. Services cover nutrition, physical activity and psychology and stakeholders range from universities to councils to private practitioners.

Timeline: Currently, participants are offered access to the program for a period of 12 months.

Highlights: The CHLP is innovative where it offers a coordinated, multi-disciplinary, person-centred, low cost and longer term approach to the prevention and management of overweight and obesity.

Sustainability: Critical elements of the CHLP include a host organization that values the delivery of integrated health services, an operational budget to assist with the employment of a coordinator and allow for program delivery costs, an engaged primary health provider able to provide health

assessments and connect participants to appropriate referral pathways and a network of engaged service providers.

Transferability: There is good reason to suggest this model could be transferred to other localities given the aforementioned requirements are met.

Conclusions, discussion and lessons learned: As of June 30th, 2019 the CHLP had 212 active clients attending at least one health assessment. A recent client satisfaction survey showed that 79% of respondents felt that their health would improve after the care that they received. Among those who had attended a review health assessment 56% had reduced their weight. Effective communication including a shared database are critical to this integrated approach.

References:

1- South Metropolitan Health Service. City of Cockburn Health and Wellbeing Profile 2019. Perth: South Metropolitan Health Service; 2019. 25 p.