

Preliminary results of a five-year integrative obesity coaching program: An action-oriented study design

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Objective

To design and implement a five-year integrative obesity coaching program with a highly adaptive character targeting adults with obesity in a Centre for Rehabilitation Vogellanden. The aim of the program is to achieve a sustainable long-term lifestyle change which lead to a better quality of life, weight changes and related health benefits.

Methods

Design, setting and implementation

- At first, a system analysis of obesity was performed by TNO based upon a bio-psycho-social systems view on health¹.
- Next, an integrative coaching program was designed and iteratively improved in close collaboration with the interdisciplinary coaching team and ten participants at Vogellanden.
- In 2015, the 5-year action-oriented study design (Figure 1) was started with a group of 10 participants. Each year thereafter a group of 10 were included. Since 2019, two groups per year were included.

Inclusion criteria:

- BMI 30 kg/m² - 45kg/m²
- 18 years or older

Exclusion criteria:

Pulmonary-, cardiovascular-, and/or psychological disorders that may interfere with participation in the program.

Results



Figure 1 Design of the Integrative Coaching Program including both healthcare providers, lifestyle coaches (with their own expertise) and System Biologist. For further details, see characteristics.

Characteristics of the program

- Five-years, focusing on achieving a sustainable healthier lifestyle
- Highly personalized, based upon a system dynamics view on obesity, the changing need and possibilities of the participant in his/her environment and the insights of trained coaches.
- Highly adaptive, choice and frequency of the intervention differs per participant and can change during the program.
- Frequent monitoring: interviews, questionnaires and biomedical characteristics.
- Both individual coaching as well as group training and coaching discussing e.g. expectations regarding weight-loss, types of eating behavior, the role of stress and sleep, etc.

Preliminary results of the program

Since the start of the program, ninety-seven participants (61 female and 18 male) divided over eight groups were included in the study (Table 1). 42 participants started more than 2 years ago. After 2 years, 26 participants (62%) are still participating the program. Results of these participants are shown in Figure 2.

Table 1 Characteristics of the 79 participants at the start of their individual intergrative coaching program.

	Mean (SD)
Age, years	46.3 (12.6)
Weight, kg	117.3 (18.1)
BMI, kg/m ²	39.5 (5.2)



Figure 2 Preliminary results two years after the start of the program (n=26).

References: ¹ van Wietmarschen, H. A., Wortelboer, H. M., & van der Greef, J. (2018). Grip on health: A complex systems approach to transform health care. *J. Eval. Clin. Pract.* 24(1), 269–277. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jep.12679>.

Conclusions

- These preliminary results show that we successfully developed a 5-year action-orientated and highly adaptive study design together with an integrative obesity coaching team in a rehabilitation setting, of which 62% participants are still participating after two years.
- The integrative obesity coaching program has the potential to coach adults with obesity towards a sustainable change of lifestyle, thereby living healthier long-term lives.