

TITLE: Effectiveness of a Six-Week Hospital Employee Weight Loss and Healthy Lifestyle Education Program.

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The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of a six-week weight loss and healthy lifestyle program (termed “Lose to Win”) on weight, body mass index, and percent body fat at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC). This program has been an annual event for almost 10 years. It is open to MUSC employees and local community members, and no inclusion or exclusion requirements were applied. Eighty-one participants voluntarily enrolled, of which 36 completed the program. Participants were considered to have completed study requirements if weight, BMI, and body fat percent (measured by a hand-held bioelectrical impedance machine), were measured at the commencement and completion of the six-week period. Presentations and informative newsletters on using the food guide pyramid, healthy cooking, dining out, grocery shopping, exercise, and portion control were offered weekly by the MUSC dietetic interns. Two-tailed student t-tests were used to compare pre- versus post weight, BMI, and body fat composition. Results indicated significant differences among mean (\pm standard deviation) pre and post weights (194.9 ± 43.0 vs. 191.0 ± 42.8 pounds; $p < 0.0005$). BMI changes were also significant (32.4 ± 7.8 vs. 31.9 ± 7.7 kg/m²; $p < 0.005$). Percent body fat dropped by $0.41 \pm 1.2\%$, but was not statistically significant due to being a more long-term indicator of nutritional status change. In conclusion, this study demonstrates that the MUSC “Lose to Win” program is an effective means for promoting weight loss and wellness. However, further study is needed to understand and improve attrition rates.