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## **Multi-center commercial weight loss through caloric restriction, behavior modification and exercise: results across time and location**

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**Background:** Commercial weight loss programs based on diet and exercise behavior change with a scalable structure can partner health professionals in the treatment of obesity and prevention of obesity co-morbidities.

**Aim:** To clarify consistency of weight and waist loss (across years and locations) of a commercial franchise company (Itrim) in Sweden.

**Methods:** Weight loss and waist loss at 12 months were analysed for the years 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 across 12 commercially operated weight loss centers in 7 cities. 1726 participants who completed one year were included (BMI 31.6 [sd 5.5] kg/m<sup>2</sup>, waist 105.0 [12.9] cm, age 47.0 [11.6] yrs, 86 % women). The one-year program consisted of 20 one-hour group sessions on diet and exercise behavior change, physical activity (circle training 2-3 times/week à 30-45 min, fitness testing and pedometers), individual coaching at 0, 10, 26 and 52 weeks, meal replacements, home assignments, and food and exercise diaries. Participants paid their own fee (approx \$1500/year).

**Results:** Overall weight loss (all mean values are age and sex adjusted) at 12 months was 10.8 kg (95 % CI: 10.4 to 11.4). The mean waist loss was 11.8 (95 % CI: 11.4 to 12.3) cm. Both weight loss and waist loss were stable across years (P=0.43 and P=0.81, respectively) but differed across centers (P<0.001 for both). Mean weight loss across centers ranged from 7.5 (95 % CI: 5.3 to 9.6) to 12.5 (95 % CI: 11.4 to 13.6) kg, with waist loss ranging from 7.1 cm (95 % CI: 3.9 to 10.2) to 16.3 (95 % CI: 14.5 to 18.1).

**Conclusions:** Commercial weight loss programs can provide stable results across time. Consistency between centers, however, remains a challenge in multi-center commercial weight loss.

**Conflict of interest:** At the time of submission, EH was employed part time by Itrim International as Programme Director. MN, JS and CM are members of Itrims Scientific Advisory Board.