

## What Motivates Women to Lose Weight?

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## Weight loss maintenance

- Very difficult, few people maintain a significant weight loss
- Required for physical and psychosocial benefits
- Significant problem in the long-term outcomes of obesity treatment

Perri, 1998



## Predictors of weight regain

- Physiological factors
  - Decreased energy requirements, increase in lipoprotein lipase activity
- Behavioural factors
  - Difficulty sustaining new habits (eating, exercise, self-monitoring)
- Psychological factors
  - Dichotomous thinking style
  - Dissatisfaction with initial weight loss regardless of weight lost
  - Failure to achieve perceived benefits of weight loss

Cooper & Fairburn, 2001



## Cognitive-behavioural analysis of weight regain

- Weight control abandoned for two reasons:
  - Cognitive
    - Not achieving weight goals (amount of weight lost)
    - Not achieving **primary goals** (benefits of weight loss)
  - Behavioural
    - Failure to acquire weight maintenance skills
    - Return to previous habits

Cooper & Fairburn, 2001



## Primary goals for weight loss

- Reasons for wanting to lose weight

### 7 Clinically derived<sup>1</sup>

Self respect & self confidence  
Relationships  
Make life changes  
Physical appearance  
Choice of clothes  
Fitness  
Health

### 9 Empirically derived<sup>2</sup>

Work confidence  
Social confidence  
Sexual confidence  
Appearance  
Clothes  
Fitness  
Health  
Comfort  
Participation

1. Cooper, Fairburn & Hawker, 2003  
2. Murphy, et al., 2009



## Aims

- To determine the relative importance of primary weight loss goals
- To explore physiological and psychosocial variables associated with primary weight loss goals



## Methodology

- Participants
  - 127 overweight women
- Measures
  - Demographics, self-esteem, depression, anxiety and stress
  - Primary Goals for Weight Loss Questionnaire (PGWLQ)
- Analyses
  - Descriptives of mean scale score
  - ANOVAs to compare group differences on PGWLQ factors



## PQWLQ Descriptives

	Mean	SD
Age (yrs)	46.44	11.48
Weight (kg)	82.88	13.10
Desired weight (kg)	66.76	7.25
BMI (kg/m <sup>2</sup> )	31.00	4.10
Depression (0-42)	5.28	7.13
Anxiety (0-42)	3.56	3.87
Stress (0-42)	9.33	7.96
Self-esteem (0-30)	19.44	5.55



## PQWLQ Factors

	Mean	SD	Internal consistency	Test-retest reliability
Fitness	81.28	16.28	0.94	.31**
Clothes	68.87	23.95	0.91	.23*
Appearance	67.71	25.51	0.98	.24*
Participation	61.35	26.05	0.93	.34**
Comfort	55.76	24.22	0.94	.32**
Health	52.42	21.03	0.90	.54**
Sexual confidence	47.77	29.02	0.85	.39**
Social confidence	42.23	28.63	0.94	.51**
Work confidence	28.06	23.42	0.88	.32**

\*\*p<.01, \*p<.05



## Importance of primary goals

- Age
- Physiological variables
  - BMI
  - Physical health rating
  - Taking medication
- Psychosocial variables
  - Depression, anxiety, stress
  - Self-esteem
  - Perceived mental health status
  - Perceived weight
  - Weight concerns
  - Weight discrepancy



## Findings

- Physiological health & taking meds (sexual)
- Age (clothing/social/sexual)
- Mental health (appearance/work)
- Perceived weight (comfort/work/clothing)
- Self-esteem (appearance/work/sexual)
- Depression (appearance/work/social)
- Anxiety (appearance)
- Stress (appearance/work/social/sexual)
- Weight bother (appearance/clothing/sexual)
- Weight discrepancy (work)



## Conclusion

- Results highlight the importance of psychosocial rather than physiological factors in understanding why women want to lose weight
- Potential benefits of considering and targeting primary goals in obesity treatment
- Need for further refinement and validation of PGWLQ



Thank you

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