

# Innovative program helps treat depression and obesity

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(PhysOrg.com) -- A University of Queensland pilot study to evaluate the effectiveness of an innovative traditional Chinese exercise program on depression and obesity has produced very promising results.

A UQ pilot study to evaluate the effectiveness of an innovative traditional Chinese exercise program on [depression](#) and [obesity](#) has produced very promising results.

The proportion of participants with clinical levels of depression decreased from 60 percent to 20 percent. BMI and waist circumference also significantly decreased by 4 percent and 3 percent respectively.

This specific program may be the first exercise program that has scientifically shown significant effects of exercise alone on both depression and diabetes (diabetes and obesity).

Dr Liu Xin, a UQ scientist who is also a TaiChi and Qigong expert, developed this unique program based on KaiMai style TaiChi for the control of depression and diabetes.

The three month pilot study, funded by the Diabetes Australia Research Trust, was conducted at The University of Queensland.

Dr Liu said it was very encouraging to see such impressive results over a short period of time, especially as this study did not involve any dietary intervention or high intensity training.

"In addition to the improvements in depression and obesity, the results of the study also show that this specific program has a beneficial effect on indicators of [blood glucose](#) control (decreased by 6 percent), hypertension (decreased by 9 percent and 12 percent in systolic and diastolic blood pressure respectively) and [insulin resistance](#) (decreased by 20 percent)," he said.

"The majority of the promising findings were replicated in a following randomized controlled trial".

An extended large controlled study focusing on depression and obesity has recently been funded by the National Heart Foundation and Beyondblue.

The funding is the second largest grant ever provided under the National Heart Foundation and Beyondblue Cardiovascular Disease and Depression Strategic Research Program.

The prevalence of depression and obesity are two of the most common health problems in the western world. In Australia, one in five people experience depression at some stage of their lives, and more than half of Australian adults are either overweight or obese.

"If this program can be further confirmed to have beneficial effects on indicators of depression, obesity and other risk factors for developing cardiovascular diseases in the large trial, the findings can be translated into great social and economic benefit for public health," Dr Liu said.

Provided by University of Queensland ([news](#) : [web](#))

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