

Patients like commercial programs for weight loss

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Amy L. Ahern, Ph.D., of MRC Human Nutrition Research in Cambridge, U.K., and colleagues conducted semi-structured telephone interviews with 16 female participants selected from the U.K. center of a randomized, controlled trial of weight loss interventions. Thematic analysis was used to develop an explanatory model of being overweight and identify the reasons for greater weight loss observed in those

attending a commercial program compared with those receiving standard care in a general practice setting.

The researchers found that participants viewed commercial programs as providers of weight management in a nonmedical context, which mirrors their beliefs about being overweight. Participants stated that they needed support and motivation, rather than education, for weight management. Ease of access and frequent contact were identified as positive features of commercial programs. Some preferred individual support from a primary care clinician, and all approved of the availability of support for weight management in a primary care setting.

"Participants welcomed the offer of weight loss support from their [general practitioner](#)," the authors write. "Providing support for [weight management](#) outside a medical context by referral to a commercial program, however, fitted better with participants' general explanatory model of being overweight."

The trial from which participants were recruited was funded by [Weight Watchers](#) through a grant to the Medical Research Council. One author disclosed [financial ties](#) to companies in the pharmaceutical, food and beverage, and diet and fitness industries.

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