Web-based support system may help people lose weight and keep it off

5 July 2018

In a randomized long-term lifestyle change trial, an Internet-based health behavior change support system (HBCSS) was effective in improving weight loss and reduction in waist circumference for up to 2 years. The findings are published in the *Journal of Internal Medicine*.

The 532-participant trial included 6 arms: cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)-based group counselling, self-help guidance-based group counselling, and control, each with and without HCBSS. Interventions using the HBCSS had significantly higher success rates at losing weight and maintaining weight loss, regardless of the type of group counselling, compared with counselling alone. In addition, the success rate was also high in participants in the control group who received HBCSS.

CBT-based counselling with HBCSS produced the largest weight reduction without any significant weight gain during follow-up. The average weight change in this group was 4.1% at 12 months and 3.4% at 24 months. HBCSS even without any group counselling reduced the average weight by 1.6% at 24 months.

"Modifiable tools based on scientific evidence are needed for personalized treatment of obesity. HBCSS combined with cognitive behavioural group therapy or as a stand-alone treatment provides us with such a modifiable method for personalized medicine," said co-lead author Dr. Tuire Salonurmi, of University of Oulu and Oulu University Hospital, in Finland.
