Should weight loss programmes be designed differently for men and women? The ROMEO (Review Of MEn and Obesity) Project

Clare Robertson\textsuperscript{a}, Alison Avenell\textsuperscript{a}, Charles Boachie\textsuperscript{b}, Fiona Stewart\textsuperscript{a}, Daryll Archibald\textsuperscript{c}, Flora Douglas\textsuperscript{d}, Pat Hoddinott\textsuperscript{e}, Edwin van Teijlingen\textsuperscript{f}, Dwayne Boyers\textsuperscript{g}

\textsuperscript{a} Health Services Research Unit (HSRU), University of Aberdeen
\textsuperscript{b} Robertson Centre for Biostatistics, University of Glasgow
\textsuperscript{c} The Scottish Collaboration for Public Health Research (SCPHRP), University of Edinburgh
\textsuperscript{d} Rowett Institute of Health and Nutrition, University of Aberdeen
\textsuperscript{e} Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professional Research Unit, University of Stirling
\textsuperscript{f} Centre for Midwifery, Maternal & Perinatal Health, Bournemouth University
\textsuperscript{g} Health Economics Research Unit (HERU), University of Aberdeen

Health Services Research Unit
University of Aberdeen

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A collaborative project between Universities of Aberdeen, Stirling and Bournemouth, with a project advisory group from the Men’s Health Forums

Project grant holders representatives

Alison Avenell
Flora Douglas
Pat Hoddinott (Ireland)
Edwin van Teijlingen

Men’s Health Forums’

David Wilkins (England & Wales)
Tim Street (Scotland)
Paula Carroll, Colin Fowler

Researchers

Clare Robertson, Daryll Archibald, Dwayne Boyers, Fiona Stewart, Charles Boachie, Evie Fioratou
Men and weight

- More men than women are overweight or obese in the UK
- Men are
  - more likely to misperceive their weight
  - less likely to consider weight as a health problem or attempt weight loss
  - under-represented in weight loss services


Aims of the ROMEO Project

• To identify and describe effective weight loss and weight maintenance interventions for men

• To identify barriers and facilitators in men’s experience of weight management
What did we do?

- Integrated systematic reviews
  1. 11 RCTs of long-term (≥1yr) lifestyle or drug (orlistat) interventions for men
  2. 20 RCTs of long-term (≥1yr) lifestyle or drug (orlistat) interventions for men compared to women
  3. 26 reports of interventions for men, or men compared to women from the UK
  4. 22 reports of qualitative research with men
  5. 5 economic evaluations of interventions for men, or men compared to women
Inclusion criteria

• Adult men and women with BMI ≥30kg/m² (or BMI ≥28 kg/m² with cardiac risk factors based on orlistat guidance)
• Results presented separately by sex
• Primary
  – weight change
• Secondary
  – waist circumference, cardiac risk factors, disease specific, adverse events, quality of life, process outcomes, economic costs
Data analysis

- Random effects meta-analysis (Review Manager 5.1) and narrative synthesis where pooling not possible

- Risk difference calculated to compare attrition between men and women

- Weighted mean difference calculated to compare weight loss between men and women
Results

- Studies identified from primary searches: n = 5498
- Studies identified from other sources: n = 17

Selected for full text screening: n = 254

Excluded: n = 5261

Excluded: n = 228

Included 20 RCTs (26 reports)
Results

- 4584 men (36.6%); 7939 women (63.4%)

- USA (9), Finland (6), Canada (1), Israel (1), Sweden (1), Switzerland (1), UK (1)

- Moderate quality (Cochrane risk of bias tool)

- 18 weight loss; 2 weight maintenance trials - 20 combinations interventions/comparators
Analysis of attrition for men and women

- Eight trials contributed to the analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Completed study</th>
<th>Did not complete study</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Proportion completing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>856</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>1197</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>1581</td>
<td>1035</td>
<td>2616</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2437</td>
<td>1376</td>
<td>3813</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Difference in proportion between men and women (95% CI) 0.11 (0.08, 0.14)

p< 0.001
Weight loss between men and women

- Eleven trials contributed to the analysis - 2026 (36.7%) men and 3493 (63.3%) women

- Two analyses: the difference in mean weight change in kg and difference in percentage weight change between men and women

- 3 trials reported different calorie deficits for men and women (Jolly 2011, Shai 2008, Wadden 2011)
Difference between mean weight loss in kg from baseline between men and women -0.24kg [-1.04, 0.56] P=0.56
Difference in % weight loss from baseline between men and women

0.15%

[-0.43, 0.73] P=0.62

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study or Subgroup</th>
<th>Male Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Female Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Mean Difference IV, Random, 95% CI</th>
<th>Mean Difference IV, Random, 95% CI</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jeffrey 1984</td>
<td>-5.0785</td>
<td>6.9592</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>-7.4335</td>
<td>9.4526</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>2.36 [-0.69, 5.40]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Korhonen 1987</td>
<td>-3.0854</td>
<td>6.9328</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>-5.6476</td>
<td>8.9659</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>2.56 [-0.96, 6.09]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ross 2012</td>
<td>-1.5451</td>
<td>4.583</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>-1.9946</td>
<td>6.015</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>0.45 [-0.61, 1.51]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vanninen 1992</td>
<td>0.3695</td>
<td>7.1035</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>-1.5089</td>
<td>7.3836</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>1.88 [-1.39, 5.14]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volpe 2008</td>
<td>3.3647</td>
<td>7.2372</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1.0084</td>
<td>7.4378</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>2.36 [-0.68, 5.39]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wadden 2011</td>
<td>-8.5399</td>
<td>5.9888</td>
<td>1044</td>
<td>-8.5443</td>
<td>8.2384</td>
<td>1526</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td>0.00 [-0.55, 0.55]</td>
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<tr>
<td>West 2008</td>
<td>-4.2179</td>
<td>7.2933</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>-3.8528</td>
<td>2.6148</td>
<td>1259</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>-0.37 [-0.98, 0.25]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wing 1991</td>
<td>-2.9394</td>
<td>7.6776</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-3.9928</td>
<td>7.1436</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>1.05 [-2.94, 5.04]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total (95% CI) 2026 3493 100.0% 0.15 [-0.43, 0.73]

Heterogeneity: Tau² = 0.19; Chi² = 13.72, df = 10 (P = 0.19); I² = 27%
Test for overall effect: Z = 0.50 (P = 0.62)

Favours male Favours female
What works for men?

- Reducing diet, physical activity & behaviour change techniques effective for both sexes

- Men lost more weight with an intensive, low fat reducing diet than women
  - mean change -3.4kg (SD 4.34) versus -0.1kg (SD 4.06)
    \[ p=0.004 \] (Shai 2008)

- Women responded better to a Mediterranean diet than a low fat reducing diet
  - Mean change -6.2kg (SD 9.48) versus -0.1kg (SD 4.06)
    \[ p=0.01 \] (Shai 2008)
What works for men?

- Groups when individual support or advice is also offered (but men were less likely to join groups/commercial providers) (Karvetti 1992, Jeffrey 1984, Wadden 2011, Hakala 1994, Jolly 2011)

- Tailoring interventions by ethnicity might be more important for women (Wadden 2011)

- Support from a spouse/partner more helpful for men than women (but not attending the same programme) (Golan 2010, Wing 1991)
What doesn’t work for men?

- Men were less able than women to maintain their weight with orlistat after initial weight loss (Richelsen 2007)
  - Women –9.7 kg (–8.4%) vs. –6.3 kg (–5.3%), reported p<0.02
  - Men –8.9 kg (–8.3%) vs. –8.1 kg (–7.5%), reported NS
- Men were less successful than women with interventions involving financial contracts for weight loss (reported p<0.05) and weight maintenance (reported p<0.006) (Jeffrey 1984)
Conclusions

• Few eligible trials, moderate quality

• Men are less likely to join weight loss programmes but, once engaged, appear less likely to drop out than women

• Men and women showed some differences in responses to different weight loss and weight maintenance interventions
Conclusions

- Description of interventions poor

- Given that men have higher energy requirements for any given weight, should the
  - Difference between men and women be taken into consideration in prescribing diet and exercise?
    - Absolute calorie deficit be more for men?
    - %Calorie deficit be the same for men and women?
What next?

• Understanding the different views of men and women is likely to improve engagement and intervention effectiveness.

• Need more, better quality, long-term (>1 year) RCTs identifying men as a separate (heterogeneous) participant group to women.

• Report weight loss outcomes & drop-out separately for men and women.
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http://www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/hta/volume-18/issue-35

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Thank you

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@hsru_aberdeen

c.robertson@abdn.ac.uk
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