What are the determinants of successful transfer of a men’s weight management programme between different professional sports club settings?

Dr Greig Logan, Dr Cindy Gray, Dr Craig Donnachie, Prof Kate Hunt
From Football (FFIT) to Rugby (MLAP)

• Professional sports clubs provide an opportunity for overweight men to overcome disengagement with weight management.

• FFIT is a group-based, weight management, physical activity and healthy lifestyle programme delivered by club community coaches in professional football clubs to overweight/obese men aged 35-65.
Move Like A Pro pilot

- 5 Premiership Rugby clubs in England (April 2016)
- Partnership with Movember and Premiership Rugby
- 12 weekly sessions delivered by Community Foundation Coaches/Managers
- ‘Pitch-side’ physical activity and ‘classroom’ interactive education and skills training
- Weight loss encouraged by ‘small steps’ approach to increasing physical activity, improving diet, and mobilising social support

Aim: To examine the transferability of FFIT to professional rugby clubs
Methods

Measurements:
- Semi-structured telephone interviews (n=24) with club Community Managers and Coaches delivering MLAP at three time points: start; end; and three months after the 12-week programme.
- Weekly self-report coach logs completed for fidelity of delivery of the programmes key components. Rated on a scale from 0 (‘not delivered’) to 3 (‘exactly as described’)

Analysis
- Thematic framework analysis was used to identify key themes/concepts in line with the Integrated Research Practice Partnership (IRPP) model
Integrated Research Practice-Partnership

Evidence-based strategy:
Football Fans in Training (FFIT)

- Critical elements:
  - Club-based delivery
  - ‘Men enough’ like me
  - Interactive peer-supported learning
  - Individualised approach
  - ‘Science but not rocket science’
  - Behaviour change techniques:
    - Self-monitoring
    - Goal setting
    - Social support
    - Transfer of behaviours

- Tested in multiple football clubs (RCT)

- Broader health policy and cultural context:
  1. National obesity, physical activity, sedentary behaviour, and healthy eating campaign
  2. Movember campaign to improve men’s health, risks and health outcomes
  3. Premiership Rugby’s vision to use the power of rugby for health and social good

- Men 35-65 years, BMI ≥25 kg/m²
- Recruitment led by research team
- Up to 30 men per delivery

Delivery sites

Rugby club
  - Community foundation
  - Community coaches

Partnership
  - Movember and Premiership Rugby

Fit
Move Like A Pro
- Made rugby-themed and additional programme content:
  - Reducing sedentary behaviour
  - Avoiding injury
  - Awareness of sugary drinks
  - Social support and key supporters
  - Team photos at start and end of 12 weeks
  - Representation of group waist reduction at halfway point
  - Social media

Before and after trial of Move Like A Pro
Results – Community Coaches

3/5 clubs successfully delivered MLAP key components as intended

Coaches and managers expressed good understanding and strong ‘buy in’ from inception

It’s my favourite programme I’m running at the moment... I didn’t know how it would go, obviously. I’d never run anything like this before. And the change from being from Scottish football fans, to rugby fans, I didn’t know how critical it would be, but as a programme, it doesn’t matter. I think the guys [participants] really buy into it. They’re actually making really, really big changes and that is fantastic. (Rugby Club 4, Coach – end of programme)

...a lot of us were thinking – is it going to be something like Weight Watchers or something like that where men don’t see that as something they want to go to? We saw how different it was and a lot better than a lot of things out there. You’re not trying to force these large impacts on their lives, and all the guys [participants] understand that, that actually it’s the smaller changes that count towards the bigger picture in the long term, and that’s where we saw the difference, we thought that was a bit better. (Rugby Club 3, Manager – start of programme)
Coaches/Managers expressed that financial, logistical, and educational support from their Rugby Club and from the Partnering Organisations was essential for successful delivery:

- **Luckily we had quite a lot of access to the main pitch** so we could play a lot more game-style physical activity sessions, which the guys loved. (Rugby Club 2, Coach – end of programme)

- **I would like more training on how to deliver the theoretical elements** of the project. **I would like more support from [Partner Organisation] on the floor**, it would be great to have some representatives from [Partner] show up and talk about the project and men’s health. [...] **If you’re going to sponsor a project you need to put a bit of effort in at grassroots level.** (Rugby Club 1, Coach – start of programme)
Conclusions

Key determinants of successful transfer of FFIT to the professional rugby setting include:

- Good Community Coach and Manager ‘buy-in’ from inception
- Adequate financial and logistical support to community coaches from the rugby club and partnering bodies
- Further training to be made available for coaching staff