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THE IMPACT OF PARTICIPATING IN AN ACTIVITY PROGRAMME (10,000 STEPS @ WORK LITE PROGRAMME) ON DIETARY CHANGE.

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Nutritional Science at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

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ABSTRACT

High levels of diet related chronic disease in New Zealand has lead to the development of health promotion programmes. The workplace is an important venue to implement health promotion programmes to encourage staff to make healthy lifestyle choices.

The aim of this research is to examine if a physical activity programme may be a ‘gateway’ to other positive behavioral changes such as healthy eating and/or cutting down smoking. This research introduces a health promotion programme to employees at a call centre. The intervention involved 3 groups: the health promotion group (HPG), which received both the physical activity programme (10,000 steps @ work ‘lite’ programme) plus nutritional information; the nutritional group (NG), which received only the nutritional information and the control group (CG), which did not take part in the intervention.

The impact of the nutritional seminars with or without the exercise programme was measured by the participants’ reported fruit, vegetable, snack consumption and transtheoretical stages of change for exercise, fruit and vegetable intake, healthy snacking and smoking. A questionnaire was used to collect data retrospectively.

The health promotion group (HPG) made positive changes in all behaviours unlike the nutritional group (NG) and the control group (CG). This provides some support for the hypothesis that physical exercise may act as a ‘gateway’ to other positive behavioural changes.
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Approval for the research has been obtained from the Massey University Ethics Committee.
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ETHICS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Ethic approval for this study was obtained in November 2005 from the Massey University Ethics Committee.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BMI Body mass index
CG Control group
HPG Health promotion group
MOH Ministry of Health
NG Nutritional group
SCM Stages of change
T1 Time one (6 months ago)
T2 Time two (Currently)
TTM Transtheoretical Model
USDA United States Department of Agriculture
WHO World Health Organisation