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Title

Hockey FIT for Women (HFIT for Women): Evaluating reach and implementation of a gender-sensitized healthy lifestyle program

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Presenters

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Abstract

Context: 57% of Canadian women have obesity or are overweight, indicating a need for novel mitigation strategies. Research suggests health promotion programs tailored to at-risk groups are more likely to be effective in improving health and sustaining implementation and outcomes long-term. Hockey FIT for Women (HFIT for Women) was adapted from Hockey Fans In Training (HFIT), a 12-week gender-sensitized healthy lifestyle program for men who were hockey fans with obesity/overweight. Process evaluation findings from both a HFIT pilot and large-scale trial indicated a need to adapt to women. Objective: Evaluate reach and implementation of the HFIT for Women program from participant and coach perspectives. Study Design & Analysis: Participant data was collected from an intake survey, virtual focus groups (n=2), and program exit survey (n=59). Coach data was collected through interviews (n=2). Transcripts and open-ended responses were analyzed thematically. Setting: Three local community fitness facilities and major junior hockey teams in Ontario, Canada. Population Studied: Participants included those who coached or completed the HFIT for Women program (i.e., identify as a woman, 18+ years of age, and passed safety screen). Intervention: HFIT for Women was 90 minutes (50% in-class education; 50% exercise), once a week, for 12 weeks. Outcome Measures: Focus groups, coach interviews, and exit surveys. Results: Majority of participants were white (98.2%), with a mean age of 41 years (± 11.3 SD), and largely college educated (45.6%), employed (91.2%), and married (47.4%). Reasons for joining the program included a desire to connect with others sharing similar interests, and the experience of a partner or relative who completed HFIT. There was a desire for more novel and engaging information from both coaches and participants. Participants expressed their wish for more informal discussion time and competition to encourage each other, and coaches noted value in seeing the bonds created between participants. Suggestions focused on building a greater connection to hockey with competitive drills and playing floor hockey. Conclusion: Social connection was a key driver for participating in HFIT for Women. Future iterations should focus on leveraging the social connection

through providing more group-based activities for the in-class portion of the program and increasing hockey-related competitive drills and games.