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Title

Hockey Fans In Training Graduate Program (HFIT Grad): Process Evaluation of an Add-on Fitness Program for HFIT Participants

Priority 1 (Research Category)

Obesity, exercise and nutrition

Presenters

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Abstract

Context: Approximately 1 in 4 Canadian adults are living with obesity, indicating a need to provide accessible, sustainable, and locally tailored programs to manage the disease long-term. HFIT Grad was a 6-week exercise and physical activity pilot program offered to previous participants who completed Hockey FIT (a 12-week healthy lifestyle program for male hockey fans who were overweight or had obesity) within the last 12 months. Objective: Evaluate the acceptability of HFIT Grad for promoting maintenance of health behaviours developed in Hockey FIT. Study Design and Analysis: Participants who completed HFIT Grad (n=27) were invited to participate in a virtual focus group (FG) over Zoom and program exit survey. FG was recorded, de-identified, and transcribed verbatim. Two researchers analyzed the transcripts and open-ended program exit survey responses thematically. Setting: HFIT Grad was delivered at two local community fitness facilities in Ontario, Canada. Population Studied: Past male participants who were overweight or had obesity, completed the Hockey FIT Program, and HFIT Grad. Intervention: HFIT Grad was delivered for 60 minutes, 2 times a week, across 6 weeks by previous Hockey FIT coaches with a background in fitness. Coaches were trained in the protocol and encouraged to adapt the exercises to fit participant abilities. Outcome Measures: One FG and program exit survey responses. Results: Participants signed up for HFIT Grad in pursuit of greater accountability in shifting back to or maintaining the health behaviour changes they made during Hockey FIT. HFIT Grad filled a previous gap in the Hockey FIT program by focusing on dynamic and challenging workouts, fostered by the advanced knowledge of the program coaches who were able to adapt, and add equipment that had not been used previously. Getting back together with their Hockey FIT peers was identified as an effective part of the program, increasing the bonds they had to each other and solidifying their commitment to helping each other maintain a healthy lifestyle. Suggestions for program improvement include incorporating check points for nutrition goals, running the program for more than six weeks with longer sessions, and one-on-one or more tailored exercises with more equipment. Conclusions: Based on participant feedback, the program was considered acceptable for the purpose of maintaining and improving health behaviour changes developed during Hockey FIT.