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Utter, Jennifer; Denny, Simon; Dixon, Robyn; Ameratunga, Shanthy; Teevale, Tasileta

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Abstract

Objective

The current research aims to describe the weight-control strategies and family support for young people reporting sustained weight loss in a large, population-based sample.

Design

Data were collected as part of Youth'07, a nationally representative survey of the health and well-being of New Zealand youth.

Setting

New Zealand secondary schools, 2007.

Subjects

Secondary-school students (*n* 9107).

Results

Among young people who attempted weight loss in the previous year, 51 % reported long-term weight loss (lost weight and maintained weight loss for 6 months). Students reporting long-term weight loss were more likely to be male, but did not differ by age, ethnicity, socio-economic deprivation or measured weight status from students who reported temporary/recent weight loss or no weight loss. Students with long-term weight loss also reported healthier weight-control strategies (e.g. exercising, eating fewer fatty foods, eating fewer sweets), high parental support for healthy eating/activity and were less likely to report being teased about their weight by their family and having junk food available at home than students with temporary/recent weight loss or no weight loss.

Conclusions

Approximately 50 % of young people attempting weight loss reported sustained weight loss. Young people who reported sustained weight loss appeared to have more family support than those who did not achieve this, suggesting the importance for weight-control services and interventions in adolescents of actively engaging the family.

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