PREDICTORS OF WEIGHT LOSS IN A HYPERTENSION PREVENTION PROGRAM.

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Obesity is a major health problem, affecting more than 25% of adults in the US. Therefore, the potential health benefits from weight reduction are considerable. We had the opportunity to assess factors associated with successful weight loss in a study conducted during the pilot phase of the Trials of Hypertension Prevention. Thirty-two volunteers who were from 1.1 to 1.6 times the recommended body weight were studied. Intervention consisted of 14 weekly sessions conducted by dietitians, a psychologist, and an exercise leader. A reduction of 500 kilocalories per day in conjunction with a modest walking program was recommended. Average class attendance was 84%; partner/spouse average attendance was 14%. Food records were kept an average of 4 days per week, and participants exercised an average of 37 minutes 3 days per week. Weight loss after the 14 weeks was analyzed to assess which factors were associated with greatest success. Variables examined were number of days per week a food record was completed, attendance at the weekly diet education classes, whether a partner/spouse attended classes, and the amount of exercise time per week. The mean initial body mass index (BMI) was 28.9 kg/m^2 and final BMI was 27.5 kg/m^2. Multivariate analysis indicated that the initial BMI and the diligence of record-keeping explained 38% of the variance. We conclude that keeping food records is an effective means of promoting and achieving weight loss.