



Effects of Using Nutrition Education for Body Weight loss in Psychiatric Day Care Center Patients

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Background

According to the Nutrition and Health Survey in Taiwan (NAHSIT 2017-2020), more than 50% of men and 40% of women in the adult population were overweight or obese. The prevalence of obesity for individuals living with chronic mental illnesses, in particular, was 2.06 times more than that of the general population. For instance, in Taiwan, 16.4% of inpatients with schizophrenia were afflicted by obesity. Noting the need to reverse and prevent obesity and overweight in the aforementioned group, we aim to design a series of courses, providing essential nutritional knowledge, as well as promoting healthy dietary guidelines for individuals suffering from psychiatric disorders.

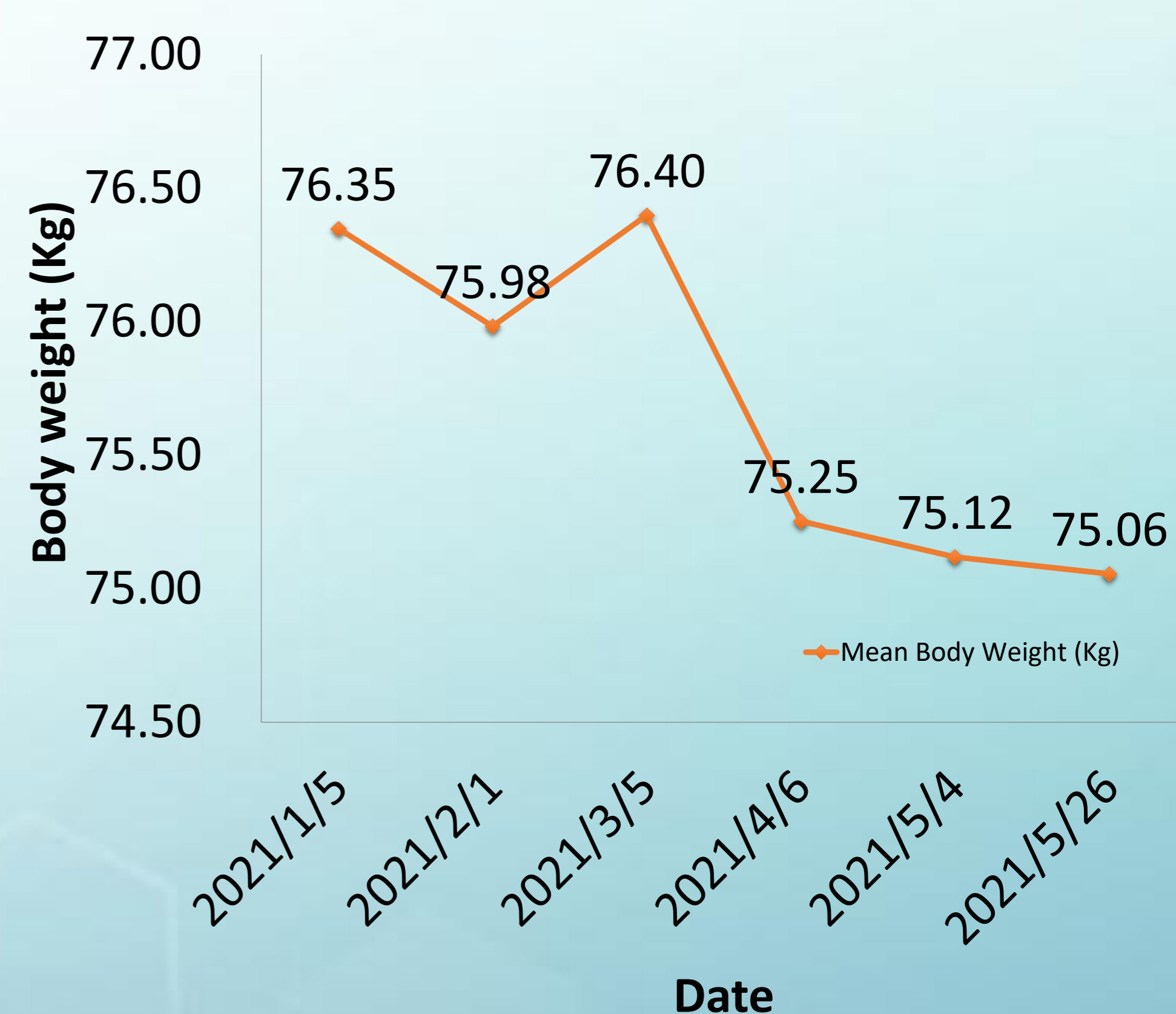
Methods

A series of experimental lessons (January 8, 2021 to May 26, 2021; once per week) were given on the 19 patients participated in this program. Throughout the program, guidelines on body control, eating principles, eating behaviors (my plate), food record, and handy guides to portion size were introduced. The participants were also required to exercise for 30 minutes in each lesson. Of all the lessons given in this program, two of which were hands-on activities — in a simulated in-classroom cafeteria, we prepared rice and three dishes for participants to learn to properly identify food portion size.



Results

Of the 19 patients participated in (9 men and 10 women; mean age 44.6 ± 12.6 years; mean height 162.3 ± 9.2 cm), their mean body weight reduces from 76.35 ± 19.03 kg to 75.06 ± 18.39 kg, a reduction which results in their mean BMI dropping from 28.68 ± 4.91 kg/m² to 28.23 ± 4.53 kg/m². One patient even reports a reduced body weight of up to 7.25 kg. The overall mean score of participants' nutritional knowledge is also evaluated: 83.4 out of 100 after the proposed education intervention. As per the experimental program, the participants respond positively and enthusiastically to the materials given in the lessons, especially to the handy guide to portion size.



Conclusions

The proposed pedagogical method is effective in helping patients manage food portion size and correct eating behaviors. Through the series of nutrition education courses and cafeteria simulations, patients had learned more skills to enhance eating behaviors and control body weight.