Free Seminar: COUNTERWEIGHT: From Research Program to Government Policy

The Centre for Obesity Management, Prevention and Research Excellence in Primary Health Care (COMPaRE-PHC) is presenting a free public seminar exploring the translation of obesity research into government policy. Presenting this seminar is UK obesity expert, Professor Iain Broom, whose weight-management program “Counterweight” has successfully made this transition.

Date: Thursday 27th February 2014  
Time: 11.30am to 12.30pm  
Venue: John B Reid Theatre, UNSW AGSM Building  
Gate 11, Botany Street Randwick  
Venue information and direction can be found at: [https://www.venuesandevents.unsw.edu.au/venues/unsw-conference/map.html](https://www.venuesandevents.unsw.edu.au/venues/unsw-conference/map.html)

Places are limited so registration is essential.  
Email: comparephc@unsw.edu.au

Professor Broom & the Counterweight Program

Professor Broom is Director of the Centre for Obesity Research and Epidemiology (CORE) at Robert Gordon University and Clinical Professor of Metabolic Medicine at the University of Aberdeen. He is also Medical Director of LighterLife, holds a Professorial Research Fellowship at the Rowett Research Centre and is a founding European SCOPE Fellow.

Professor Broom has been responsible, along with several UK colleagues, for the development of the Counterweight weight-management program, of which he is Chairman. Counterweight is one of the few weight-loss programs that have been successfully rolled out across a health system after research. It includes three weight-management programs targeting different groups: generally overweight, individuals with a higher BMI, and families.

Counterweight has over 12 years’ experience within the UK’s National Health Service and has been commissioned by over 30 primary care trusts and directly by the Scottish Government to implement Counterweight in 13 out of their 14 Health Boards as the weight management program of choice.

The seminar

Professor Broom will present:

- Counterweight: It’s development and cost-effectiveness
- The roll out of Counterweight across the health system – the successes, the problems and how these were dealt with, and what has been achieved.

The presentation will be followed by Q&A with the audience.

COMPaRE-PHC is a centre of research excellence funded by Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute. COMPaRE-PHC aims to contribute to improving the prevention and management of obesity by primary health care through its research and exchange of knowledge.
Overview

Counterweight is a weight management programme which includes both weight loss and weight loss maintenance as integral parts of the overall healthcare technology. The programme was put together in 2001 after synthesis of all the information available to ensure the best evidence base for weight loss and maintenance of that loss was the programme's foundation. The research aspects of the programme included an audit of obesity and its comorbidities within Primary Care in the UK across all BMI bands from 18 to >50 Kg/M2, followed by an intervention within Primary Care to effect clinically meaningful weight loss and maintenance over 2 years. The programme used the principles of continual improvement and was based on the MRC Complex Intervention Guidelines. The audit and intervention aspects ran from 2001 to 2005, the research phase, with ongoing development and refinement of the programme from 2006.

Counterweight is designed to be delivered in the community, initially through Primary Care but refined to allow delivery by healthcare workers and assistants working in the community but not attached to Primary Care Practices, pharmacists and pharmacy assistants, and by delivery through sport and recreation facilities. The programme was initially based on healthy eating approaches minus 600 Kcal in association with behaviour change technology and advise on physical activity. It is designed to train all of the above workers to a standard that they are able to achieve and maintain expertise in the management of weight. This is done over a period of time through group or one to one training in all aspects of weight management, followed by a period of mentoring on a regular basis over period of 6 months to 1 year.

The results of the initial research phase indicate 35% of all patients entered into the programme achieving >5% weight loss maintained over 2 years. In addition modelling was carried out to indicate the expected advantage of moving through the BMI bands in relation to the prevalence of various obesity associated disease. A health Economic analysis of the programme indicated that Counterweight was dominant under all aspects of outcome, ie. it was cheaper to have Counterweight in place than do nothing at all. To date it is the only evidence-based obesity management programme delivered in the community with clinically relevant outcomes, and has been accorded “gold standard” status by the World Health Authority.

More recently the programme has been further refined to deal with the seriously obese (BMI >40Kg/M2), using formula diets delivered in the community, and producing weight loss comparable with reversal of type 2 diabetes (>15Kg). The evidence for the programme’s success can all be located at “Counterweight.org” where pdf’s all the published papers (10 to date) can be found. Research continues in the area of childhood obesity with family programmes being developed and evaluated.

The programme itself, in relation to patient management, is designed to be delivered to groups of patients or as an individual as one to one delivery. It can therefore be moulded to the individual’s requirements as well as that of the weight management counsellor.
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