

A Novel Home-Based Intervention for Child and Adolescent Obesity: The Results of the Whānau Pakari Randomized Controlled Trial

According to the New Zealand Ministry of Health, obesity is the leading cause of healthy life loss in the country. Previous studies have also shown obesity disproportionately affects Māori and those from deprived areas. Therefore, researchers have been testing various obesity treatment programs to determine if they are both efficacious and accessible. This unblinded randomised controlled trial attempted to “report 12 - month outcomes from a multidisciplinary child obesity intervention program, targeting high - risk groups.” Children from Taranki, New Zealand were eligible if they were “aged 5 to 16 years and had BMI \geq 98th percentile or $>$ 91st percentile with weight - related comorbidities.” In addition, study participants were required to be willing and able to participate in the interventions and to have at least one family member committed to their improvement.

After eligible participants were selected, scientists split them into two groups. While “both groups received 6 - month follow - up with home visits and assessments with advice, as well as a multidisciplinary team meeting review with paediatrician oversight to address any identified weight - related comorbidities,” only the “intensive intervention group [...] participated in a 12 - month multidisciplinary program with weekly group sessions delivered by a physical activity coordinator, dietitian, and psychologist.” These sessions included physical activities, diet counselling and psychological interventions. Researchers settled on BMI standard deviation scores as the primary outcome. At both six and twelve months, both groups experienced similar but significant BMI SDS reductions. The study was highly successful at recruiting Māori and deprived youth, but future studies should focus on retention of these populations.

Reference: Anderson YC, Wynter LE, Grant CC, Cave TL, Derraik JGB, Cutfield WS, Hofman PL. A Novel Home-Based Intervention for Child and Adolescent Obesity: The Results of the Whānau Pakari Randomized Controlled Trial. *Obesity* (Silver Spring). 2017 Nov;25(11):1965-1973. doi: 10.1002/oby.21967.