

Study reveals extreme weight loss differential in men vs. women

Despite recent efforts by Weight Watchers and other pound-shedding purveyors to bring more men into the dieting fold — even resorting to dressing NBA legend-turned-diet spokesperson Charles Barkley in drag to convince men it's possible to "lose like a man" in one recent male-focused marketing campaign, men still account for less than 15% of participants in commercial weight-loss programs.

Findings from a new, first-of-its-kind study reveal why this disparity exists, underscoring the critical, often absent, component of tapping into the male psyche—namely proving that men respond overwhelmingly well to weight loss programs employing a competition-fueled, cash prize-based approach. HealthyWage (www.HealthyWage.com), the only company that pays Americans to lose weight regardless of which diet and/or fitness program they choose to follow (Jenny Craig, Nutrisystem, Atkins, or any other formal or informal diet/fitness regimen), recently announced results from a collaborative study uncovering that, while weight loss wagering is an extraordinarily successful way to motivate both genders to lose weight (proffering an overall 49% and 29% success rate for a respective 5%+ and 10%+ body weight loss).

Men are more than four times more likely than women to win a weight loss "bet." In the study, fully 63% of male participants in a weight loss "betting" program realized success, losing

10% or more of their body weight, versus 15% of women achieving this same notable measure of weight loss. Gimmicks and cross-dressing need not apply.

The groundbreaking study found remarkable success for men involved in a weight loss "bet" and is the first to verify that men and women lose weight differently.

In brief, employees at a top-tier Fortune 50 (fifty) company were given the opportunity to make a weight loss wager—to ante up \$100 to win \$400 if they lost a significant 10% of their starting body weight within six months.

The result was stunningly widespread weight loss among participants — particularly men. Of the total participants, 63% of the male subjects won the "bet" and were paid \$400; 15% of female subjects also won the \$400; consequently, more than a quarter — 29% — of all program participants in total won the bet and the cash. Notably, nearly half — 49% — of all program participants reported losing at least 5% of their starting weight. The full "Results and Conclusions" of the study are accessible online at www.kerncomm.com/Weight-LossBetting.pdf.

"While it's no surprise that men respond to competitive, game-like scenarios, this innate quality is now proven to be particularly favorable and advantageous in competitive, prize-driven weight loss endeavors," said HealthyWage co-founder David Roddenberry. "These

study findings validate that weight loss wagering programs like our '10% Challenge' are not only

highly rewarding for both genders both physically and financially, they're also especially effective for men since such efforts tap into the male drive for competition and a desire to win."

"While companies are increasingly offering weight management solutions to their employees to save on health care costs, all too often women comprise the majority of weight loss program participants," Roddenberry said.

"Not surprising, since most of these programs do not have a 'betting' or other competitive or cash prize component. As such, hundreds of large U.S. employers are wisely supplementing current efforts with HealthyWage's plug-and-play programs to better engage the men in their staff pool and uniquely motivate both genders to improve their health and wellness."

The study put to the test other academic research findings and industry initiatives that have proven behavioral economic-based interventions are extremely powerful tools for helping both men and women accomplish behaviors that are in their self-interest but which, due to self-control problems, they have difficulty accomplishing.

The same decision errors that often result in self-destructive behavior can be used instead to help people engage in beneficial behaviors, such



as weight loss.

In fact, other recent research has shown that weight loss incentives “supercharge” weight loss interventions, with one widely-cited study revealing that participants in a weight intervention program who were given a financial incentive were three times more likely to achieve a defined weight loss goal than a control group that did not receive a financial incentive.

John Cawley, an economist at Cornell University who studies the economics of obesity, commented on the findings, “I’m excited to see what companies are doing to find win-win solutions in which individuals can achieve their weight loss goals and health care costs can be reduced. The results from the HealthyWage weight loss bet illustrate how economic incentives can be used to promote

healthy behaviors.

The gender differences they find raise the interesting question of how to tailor these sorts of incentives to what works best for different groups.”

“We have more than 40 of the Fortune 500 as clients, including Office Depot, Huntsman, and Sonic Automotive,” Roddenberry said.