MAY 2024

GAME OF STONES Newsletter

***Game of Stones** is funded by the UK National Institute for Health and Care Research https://www.nihr.ac.uk/ We are investigating whether text messages and incentives help men to lose weight and keep it off.*

The results are in!

Welcome and thank you

Thank you for all your help with The Game of Stones study. We really appreciate all that you have done for us. While we are still collecting data, the results from the first year of the study are in and we wanted to share them with you as soon as we could.

A reminder of what we did...

We wanted to see if daily text messages, with or without the chance of getting money in return for losing weight, would work to help with weight loss. 585 men living with obesity across Scotland, England and Northern Ireland, took part in the research and were split in to three groups by chance:

1. Group getting text messages and opportunity to get money for weight loss
2. Group getting text messages alone
3. Group who got nothing for one year (to compare with the groups above).



Game of Stones appointment, Bristol

The men were given targets of 5% weight loss at 3 months, 10% at 6 months, and maintain that 10% weight loss at 12 months – at which point the cash was paid to the group offered the cash incentive. Every man was asked questions about their health and wellbeing, and their experiences of being in the study.

Funded by NIHR Public Health Research [REF 129703]

The results!

After one year, **the men in Group 1 (getting the text messages AND the opportunity to get money) lost the most weight**. The men in Group 2 (getting text messages only) lost some weight but not as much as the first group. The men in Group 3 (getting nothing for one year) lost a very small amount of weight but not as much as the other groups.

Mean % weight loss: 0-12 months	
1. Texts with incentives	5%
2. Texts alone	3%
3. Control group	1%

51 men took weight loss medication, removing them from the analysis did not change the results.

Our participants:

- *Average age 51 years*
- *39% living in areas with lower socioeconomic status*
- *29% had a disability*
- *40% had multiple long-term conditions*
- *25% had been diagnosed with a mental health condition*

Why are these results important?

This study showed that Game of Stones could be a low-cost solution for the health service to offer men. We were able to reach men who are often underserved by health promotion activities. We hope the findings will help inform policy makers and be adopted by NHS organisations to support action to tackle obesity.

"The research showed that offering cash incentives was a popular and effective way of helping men to lose weight."

Professor Pat Hoddinott, Chief Investigator

What happens next?

We are continuing to see men at 24 months to look at the long-term results of the study, so if you have not been seen yet then your local fieldworker will be in touch and we hope to see you soon. We also intend to hold some participant events later in 2024 to present these results and will be in touch.

How do I get more information?

For more information, please see the Game of Stones website: **www.gameofstonesresearch.com** or contact the team by emailing: **gameofstones@stir.ac.uk**