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## Reducing CVD Risk Factors for Men/Hard-to-Reach Men Using English Premier League Soccer Clubs

**Author Block** Andy Pringle, Stephen Zwolinsky, James McKenna, Andy Daly-Smith, Steve Robertson, Alan White. *Leeds Metropolitan University, LEEDS, United Kingdom.*

### *Abstract:*

Over two thirds of men in England UK, have two or more risk factors for cardio-vascular disease (CVD). When combined with comparatively low levels of engagement with primary health care (PC), innovative approaches and alternative strategies/places are required to connect these hard-to-reach (HTR) men with health improvement programmes.

**PURPOSE:** To investigate the effect of Premier League Health (PLH), a national programme of CVD risk factor reduction/prevention for men/HTR men delivered in/by English Premier League (EPL) soccer clubs.

**METHODS:** Health interventions were delivered to males with heightened risk of CVD and not using PC services. Interventions were underpinned by physical activity (PA) (e.g. soccer/gym/walking) and delivered alongside lifestyle educational sessions (e.g. smoking/diet) led by professional health trainers employed by the clubs. Sessions took place at 16 EPL soccer clubs. Validated self-reported data for demographics and CVD risk factors were collected at pre-intervention and 12-week follow-up.

**RESULTS:** Predominantly, White British men (70.4%, n=2669/3788), aged 18-44 years (80.2%, n=3032/3779) in employment (60.7%, n=1907/3143) responded. Over 85%, (n=1428/1667) presented with  $\geq 2$  simultaneous risk-factors for CVD. The majority of men (80%, n=1984/2481), did not perceive their health to be 'at risk'. A third, (n=860/2580) 'never' used PC and were more likely to report 3-4 CVD risk factors when compared to those who did use PC  $\chi^2 [1]= 4.17, p<.05$ ). Table 1 shows level of change in CVD risk factors at pre vs. post-intervention.

Variable	N	Pre (SD)	Post (SD)	df	t	r
Physical Activity (Sessions/Week)	2917	2.34 (1.52)	2.49 (1.53)	2916	-13.75**	0.26
Diet: Fruit and vegetables (Daily portions)	2673	2.34 (1.38)	2.44 (1.38)	2672	-8.39**	0.16
Sitting (Hours/Day)	2223	5.63 (2.70)	5.26 (2.67)	2222	13.09**	0.27
BMI (kg/m <sup>2</sup> )	2074	26.72 (5.50)	26.43 (5.39)	2073	10.05**	0.21
Alcohol (Units/Week)	1727	16.35 (18.67)	15.68 (18.23)	1726	7.84**	0.18

Note: \*\*p<0.001, df= degrees of freedom, t= t-statistic, r= effect size.

**CONCLUSION:** PLH engaged HTR men not using PC services and showed positive change in CVD profiles for participating males.