The Impact of Worksite Weight-Related Social Norms on Associated Behaviors

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OBJECTIVE AND RATIONALE

**Objective:** To assess the association between descriptive social norms for weight and weight-related behaviors and associated behaviors at the worksite

**Background and Rationale:**
- Obesity and weight gain clusters in social networks
- However, little is known about the psychosocial mechanisms by which this happens
- Social norms are defined as: “How the majority of individuals in a group think or behave; group standards and values for a particular behavior”
- Descriptive social norms, defined as “perceptions of the occurrence or frequency of the health-related behavior in a population” may be of particular importance for obesity-related behaviors
- Few studies have examined the association of social norms with dietary and physical activity behaviors in adults
- No study has examined social norms for weight-loss specific behaviors
- Most adults under the age of 65 spend significant amounts of time at work. Thus, the worksite social norms can influence an individual’s behavior

RESULTS

**Study sample description**

![Study sample description chart](chart1.png)

**LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

**Limitations:** 1) Causality can’t be assessed; 2) Social desirability bias; 3) Limited generalizability

**Conclusions:**
- Associations of weight loss and eating social norms with behavior
  - Unique from social support
- No association of physical activity social norms with physical activity
  - May be little opportunity for and therefore little exposure to physical activity during the workday
- Results support the development of weight loss interventions that address social norms for weight loss and eating behaviors at work

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