

## Introduction & Background

- ABLE2 is a fitness program located at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) St. Margaret Bloomfield-Garfield Family Health Center (BG FHC) and Creative Fitness Gym in Pittsburgh
  - Patients exercise with their doctors once a week for 8 weeks
  - Leading causes of death in the US: heart disease, cancer, chronic lower respiratory diseases, stroke
  - 20-40% of the deaths can be **prevented by healthier lifestyles**
- Preventative medicine:
- Exercise regularly
  - Make healthy food choices
  - Maintain normal weight
  - Stop smoking



## Aim

- Patients exercising with their physicians to improve motivation to eat better and exercise more regularly
- Teach patients about nutrition and recommended amounts of exercise
- For example: recommended amount of exercise from the American Heart Association (AHA)

For Overall Cardiovascular Health:



- For example: recommended diet from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)



## Methods

- Dates: 7/18/18 – 9/5/18 (8 weeks), every Wednesday at 6:30PM
- Participants met at the Bloomfield Garfield FHC
- A nutrition topic is discussed for 15 min (physicians provide this topic with the help of a clinic nutritionist)
- Then patients and physicians walk to a nearby fitness studio two blocks away ('Creative Fitness Pittsburgh')
- Participants engage in 45 min of aerobic exercise and muscle strengthening activity led by a certified fitness instructor

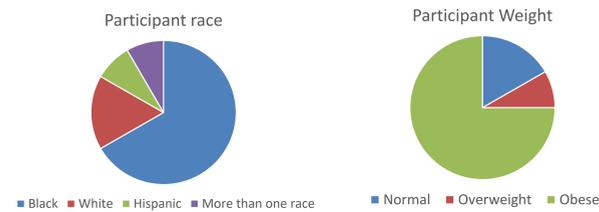


- Surveys, demographics, and weights of patients obtained at the beginning of the program
- Compared weights at the beginning and end of the study
- Double-blinded: no patient identifiers used (ex: middle name 'Jane' and date of birth 'Feb 9' would sign-in as 'J9')

- Variables:
- Group classes motivates participants more than working out alone
  - Weight loss competition – the participant who lost the most weight at the end of 8 weeks won a \$100 gift card
  - Free classes (expenses covered by UPMC St. Margaret Foundation)

## Results

- Number of participants total: 12, all female
  - 8 Black
  - 2 White
  - 1 Hispanic
  - 1 More than one race
- Starting BMI of participants
  - Range of starting BMI's: 20.3-38.9
  - Average starting BMI: 31
- Age of participants
  - Range of ages: 19-58 years old
  - Average age: 40 years old



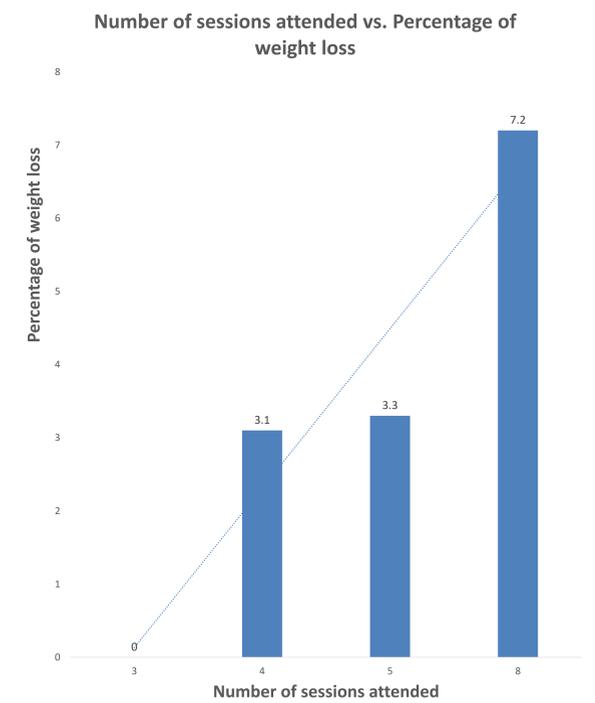
- Fitness goals from participants on initial survey:



- Barriers to fitness reported by participants on initial survey:



- Most patients came the first session, but the number of attendees decreased over the course of the study
- Average attendance per session: about 3 participants
- Note: physicians were not included in the number of participants. There were 1-4 physicians per session
- **Final weigh-in after 8 weeks:**
  - Number of participants at last session for final weigh-in: 4
  - Weight change of these participants: loss of 0 to 14 pounds
  - Range of weight loss percentage: 0% to 7.2%



## Discussion

- ABLE2 was successful in motivating some patients to lose weight
- The amount of weight loss was dependent on how frequently they came to the exercise and nutrition classes
- The more often they attended, the more weight they lost!
- However, it was difficult for patients to come to all 8 classes, and some sessions had low attendance
- Participation was low despite the following factors:
  - Free group exercise classes
  - Working out with physicians
  - Weight loss competition with monetary reward
- Barriers preventing patients from coming to ABLE2 sessions: motivation, time, fatigue, stress
- If able to overcome some of the above barriers to increase participation, likely more patients would lose weight
- Need to motivate patients to make their **health a priority**



## Conclusions

- Patients exercising with their physicians improves motivation to eat better and exercise more regularly
- Results confounded by the following variables: free group classes, monetary reward for losing the most weight, and small sample size
- In addition, some participants had a normal weight in the beginning of the study, and these patients did not continue the program
- Participation may improve if the clinic staff spends more time promoting and advertising the ABLE2 fitness program
- Ideally, ABLE2 will 'jump start' a healthy lifestyle, and patients will continue exercising and eating well in the future
- Some patients continue classes at Creative Fitness and other gyms even after the ABLE2 program ends



- Final thoughts and looking forward:**
- There is a benefit of structured fitness programs at primary care clinics, and more research is needed on this topic
  - Doctors can personally promote a healthy lifestyle by exercising alongside their patients and teaching them about nutrition
  - ABLE2 will continue about twice a year at the BG FHC, and hopefully this program will motivate other clinics to create similar fitness programs for their patients

## References:

1. CDC. Up to 40 percent of annual deaths from each of five leading US causes are preventable. May 1, 2014. <http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2014/p0501-preventable-deaths>.
2. American Heart Association Recommendations for Physical Activity in Adults. April 18, 2018. <http://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/fitness-basics/aha-recs-for-physical-activity-in-adults>.
3. *Am Fam Physician*. Diets for Health: Goals and Guidelines. 2018; 97(11):721-728.
4. Choose My Plate. USDA. <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/MyPlate>.