

College Freshman Stress and Weight Change: Differences by Gender

Christina D. Economos, PhD; M. Lise Hildebrandt, MPH; Raymond R. Hyatt, PhD

Objectives: To examine how stress and health-related behaviors affect freshman weight change by gender. **Methods:** Three hundred ninety-six freshmen completed a 40-item health behavior survey and height and weight were collected at baseline and follow-up. **Results:** Average weight change was 5.04 lbs for males, 5.49 lbs for females. Weight gain was related to increased alcohol consumption ($P=0.014$) in men and increased workload ($P<0.001$) in

women. Weight loss was associated with lower academic confidence at baseline ($P=0.009$) and peer pressure modified by alcohol increase ($P=0.025$) in men, and fruit/vegetable consumption at baseline ($P=0.015$) in women. **Conclusions:** Gender-specific approaches to weight management in this population are needed.

Key words: college health, weight gain, obesity, stress

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