

College Students' Motivation to Achieve and Maintain a Healthy Weight

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Objectives: To develop and refine a scale of motivational factors related to healthy weight achievement and maintenance and to examine differences by gender and weight status. **Methods:** A cross-sectional survey of 300 university students aged 18-24 years. **Results:** Factor analysis yielded 6 factors – Intrinsic (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.73$): affective motivation, self-efficacy/interest; Extrinsic (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.68$): social reward, peer pressure, lack of choice, and

authority influence. Males and normal-weight students showed higher affective motivation and overall intrinsic motivation compared to females and overweight students, ($P<.001$). **Conclusion:** Intrinsic motivational factors and gender differences should be considered in developing obesity prevention interventions in this age-group.

Key words: weight maintenance, obesity, overweight, motivation, college students

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