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“Taste & See”

A church-based programme for a healthy
relationship with food:

Preliminary Results of a Feasibility Study

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Background

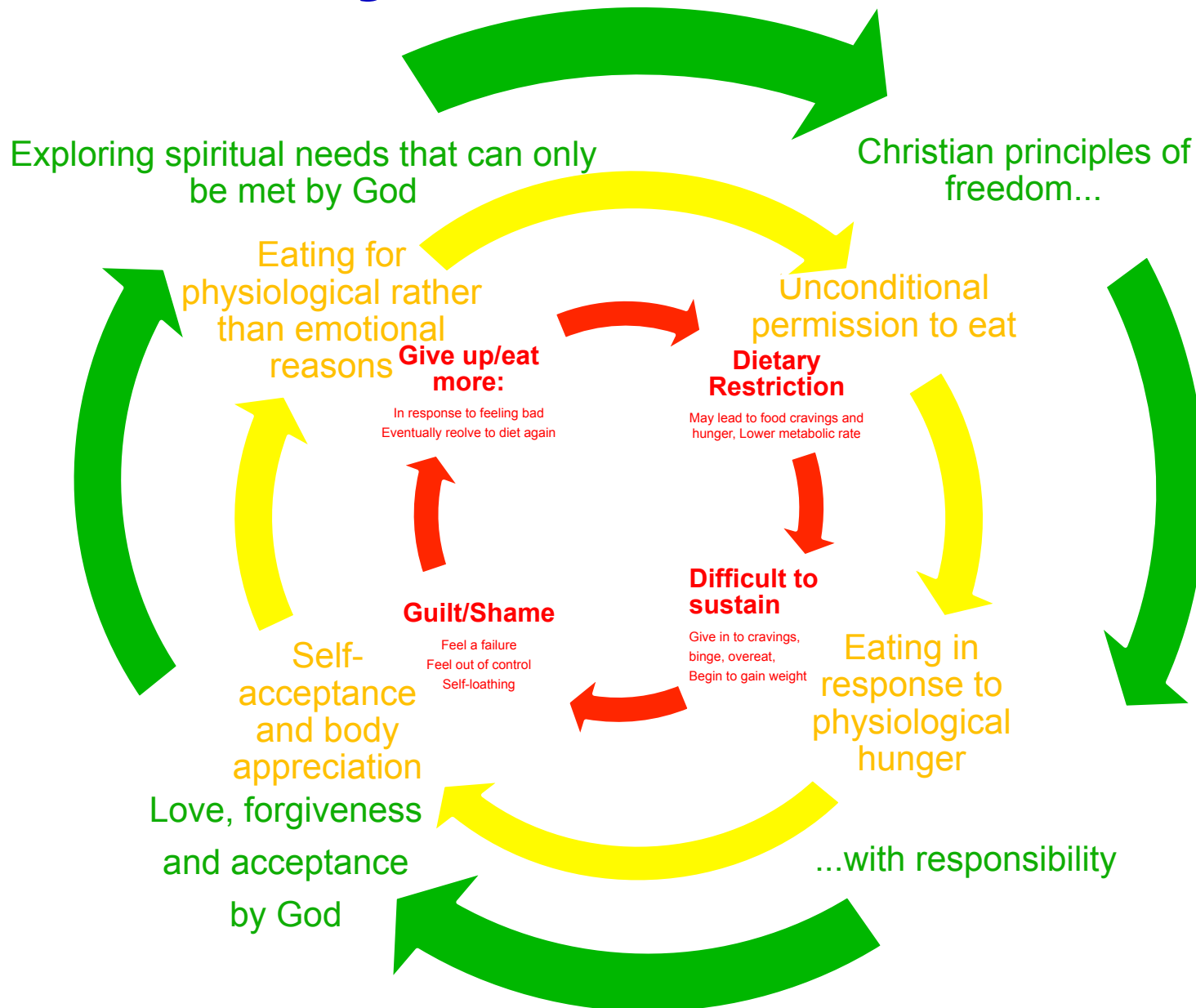
- Obesity treatment remains a high priority globally (1).
- Evidence suggests holistic approaches, which include a religious element, are promising (2).
- Much of this is US research, but recent evidence suggests a particular UK need among Christians (3).

Objective

- To conduct a mixed methods pre-post feasibility study of a 12 week faith-based, healthy, intuitive eating programme, within a UK church.



Theory of intervention



Methods

- 18 participants with BMI > 25kg/m²
- Ethical approval was granted Coventry University Ethics committee.
- Results were analysed using intention to treat (ITT) analysis; baseline observation carried forward (BOCF) was used to input missing data.
- Qualitative data were collected using semi-structured interviews and analysed thematically.



Results - feasibility

- Best recruitment method: word of mouth
- Most sample were white, Christian, 'middle-aged', well educated, women,
- 1 drop out
- Most attendees missed at least 2 sessions (holidays, prior commitments)
- Facilitators would have liked more training, simpler resources



Results at 12 weeks

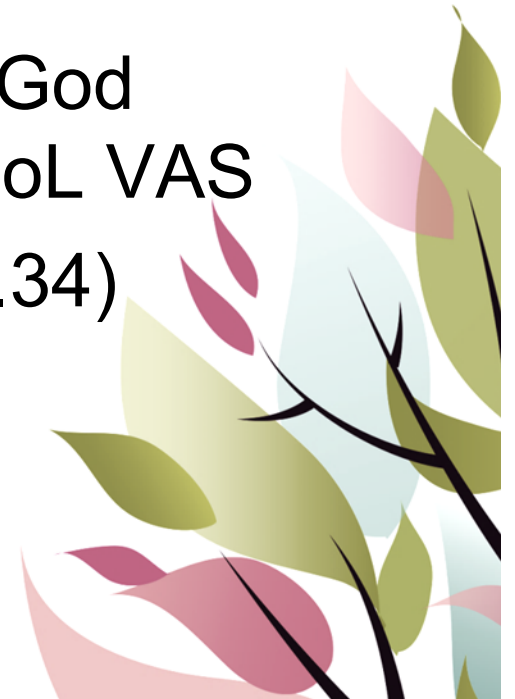
(mean change [95% CI])

- Weight -1.57kg [-2.85, -0.28],
- VAS Quality of Life 11.72 [3.89, 19.55],
- Mental well-being 6.72 [4.08, 9.36],
- Depression (PHQ-9) -3.06 [-4.89, -1.22]
- Anxiety (GAD7) -4.11 [-6.06, -2.16]
- Intuitive-eating scores 13.06 [6.96, 19.15]
- Restrained-eating (TFEQ) 19.14 [9.99, 28.28]
- Emotional eating 11.42 [1.01, 21.82].
- Spiritual well-being 4.78 [-1.08, 10.63]
- Religious love 0.39 [-0.64, 1.41]
- Avoidance attachment to God -0.44 [-0.80, -0.07]
- Anxiety attachment to God -0.35 [-0.17, 0.88]



Associations

- Increase in Avoidant Attachment to God was associated with an increase of 3 units (14%) on the anxiety scale (GAD: 0-21)
coeff(95% CI): 2.99 (1.17, 4.83)
- Increase in Avoidant Attachment to God associated with a 9% reduction in QoL VAS
coeff (95% CI): -8.83 (-17.32, -0.34)



Qualitative Findings:

- Several themes emerged through close engagement with the data.
- Two master themes shall be presented, as these represented particular salient aspects of participants' experience of the programme.



When freedom and food collide

“It’s almost like you’re giving us a licence to indulge”

“It was really almost like opening the floodgates and saying ‘right you can have everything—go and empty Tesco’s’.”

“There was the temptation to go away and say: ‘well I can eat everything’.”

“It [freedom] teaches you how to think for yourself and not to stick to a schedule”

“I think I was taking responsibility for what I was doing and a little bit more than somebody imposing on me”

“It teaches you to be more responsible”

“Food is not the enemy”

“Today I had two pieces of toast and honey without too much guilt it was really nice to be released from that”

“This feels very different ... feel a lot less stressed about eating now, a lot less guilt attached to eating, lot less cravings—so it’s kind of dealt with bigger issues”



‘Weight loss through the eyes of the creator’

“I’ve never taken it to God”

“I felt it was trivial for God”

“I’ve never brought them together because as far as I’m concerned my eating is a big failed area of my life whereas my faith and my relationship with God has just gone from strength to strength.”

“I’m going to change myself with God’s help.”

“I have a responsibility to treat my body as the temple that it is.”

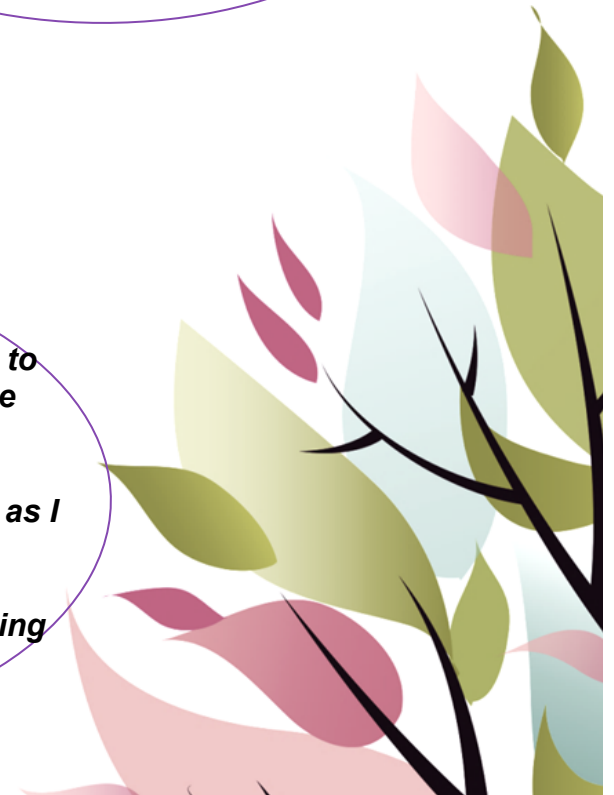
“God does want to help me”

“God’s love as a catalyst for self-love”

“God’s loves me as I am but wants me to love myself and lose some weight to be healthy.”

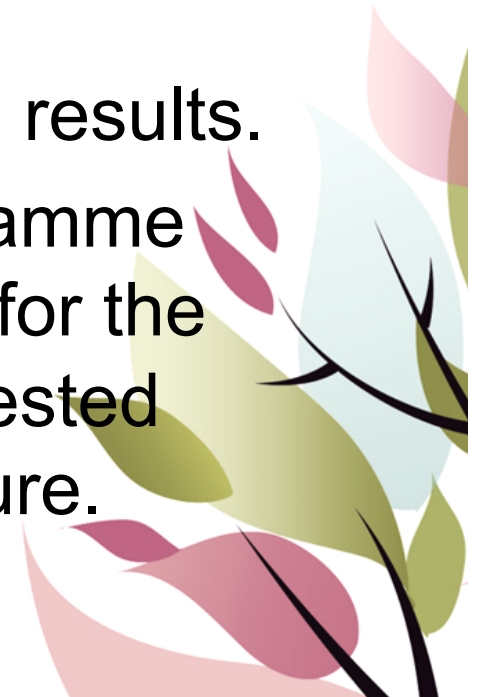
“I have learned that God loves me just as I am, so why shouldn’t I do the same?”

“I know God loves me with an everlasting love, so I need to love myself”



Conclusion

- Feasible to recruit, to train church volunteers to be facilitators, to evaluate
- Preliminary results support a mainly positive association of outcomes with this intervention.
- However uncertainty exists due to the small sample size
- A larger study is needed to confirm these results.
- The Christian weight management programme was a unique and welcomed experience for the participants. The qualitative results suggested acceptability for a programme of this nature.



References

1. World Health organization (WHO) (2000) Obesity: preventing and managing the global epidemic Report of a WHO Consultation (WHO Technical Report Series 894)
2. Lancaster, K. J., Carter-Edwards, L., Grilo, S., Shen, C., and Schoenthaler, A.M. (2014) 'Obesity interventions in African American faith based organizations: a systematic review'. Obesity Reviews, 15 (S4), 159-176.
3. Lycett, D. (2014) 'The Association of Religious Affiliation and Body Mass Index (BMI): An Analysis from the Health Survey for England'. Journal of Religion and Health

