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Case Study: Workplace Wellness Programming for an Individual with Mild Mental Retardation

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Introduction

- Obesity is a major health problem in the US, especially for those with mental retardation⁽³⁾
- Individuals with mental retardation frequently demonstrate low fitness levels and work productivity⁽¹⁾
- WACOSA is a place for individuals with disabilities to work and serve their community
- Previously, WACOSA conducted a wellness program, that consisted primarily of exercise activities found work productivity increased for most clients

Client's Goals

- To increase skills needed for paid employment through teaching techniques and communication styles he understands
- Increasing independence at home, includes being able to do daily tasks like cooking, cleaning, and doing laundry
- Decrease the frequency of situations in which MB gets angry and be able to calm down after these incidents

Wellness Program

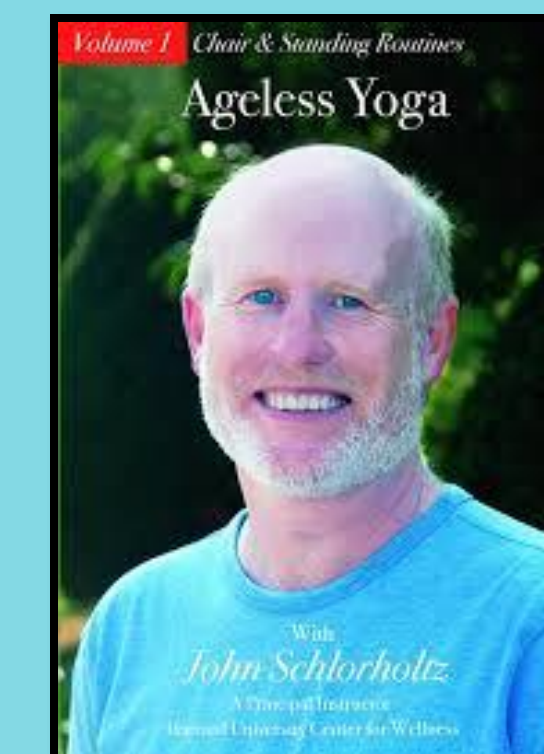
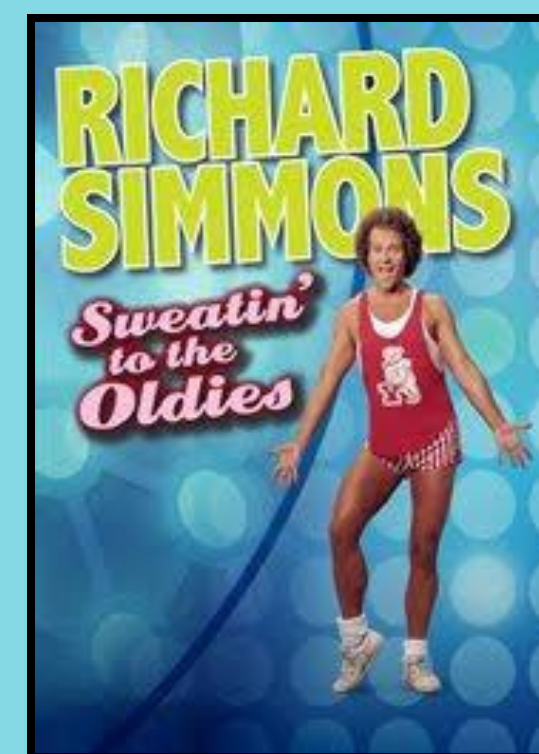
- One hour session, once per week for 14 weeks
- Rotation between aerobics exercise video, chair yoga exercise video, mall walking, and nutrition activities throughout the weeks
- Nutrition videos and activities focus on distinguishing between healthy and unhealthy foods
- BMI was calculated at the beginning and end of the 14 week program
- MB's work productivity was assessed each month

Discussion

- A workplace wellness program may be an effective strategy to improve BMI and work productivity
- Results of study are consistent with Croce and Horvat who found an exercise program increased cardiovascular fitness, strength, and work productivity⁽²⁾
- A major limitation of this study is the inability to generalize results due to the small sample size
- Confounding variables include:
 - Lack of consistency of clients coming into wellness program once a week
 - Issues in assessing work productivity
- The improvement could have occurred as a result of other uncontrolled variables
- Future research should assess more health related variables both pre- and post-intervention

Purpose

- To investigate how a workplace wellness program, which includes exercise and nutrition programming, affects an individual with mild mental retardation at WACOSA



Case Presentation

- A client, we will call MB, is diagnosed with mild mental retardation
- MB was born with congenital brain malformations because of hydrocephalus
- Mental retardation: overall IQ of 57, verbal IQ of 61, and performance IQ of 59
- Physical impairments: left sided visual deficits, left amblyopia, mild spastic dipelgia, and epilepsy
- Social challenges: has an inability to deal with frustrations and gets angry easily with housemates/other clients
- Low work productivity was identified as an area for improvement for MB
- According to MB's BMI of 24.5, he is categorized as normal range but on the edge of overweight

Outcome

- MB loved the wellness program and always gave it his full effort
- He even asked for notes from the exercise videos so he could do them at home with his housemates
- MB's BMI improved from from 24.5 to 23.9 during the 14 week period
- MB's work productivity improved from December to February, coinciding with the wellness program that started in January (Figure 1)

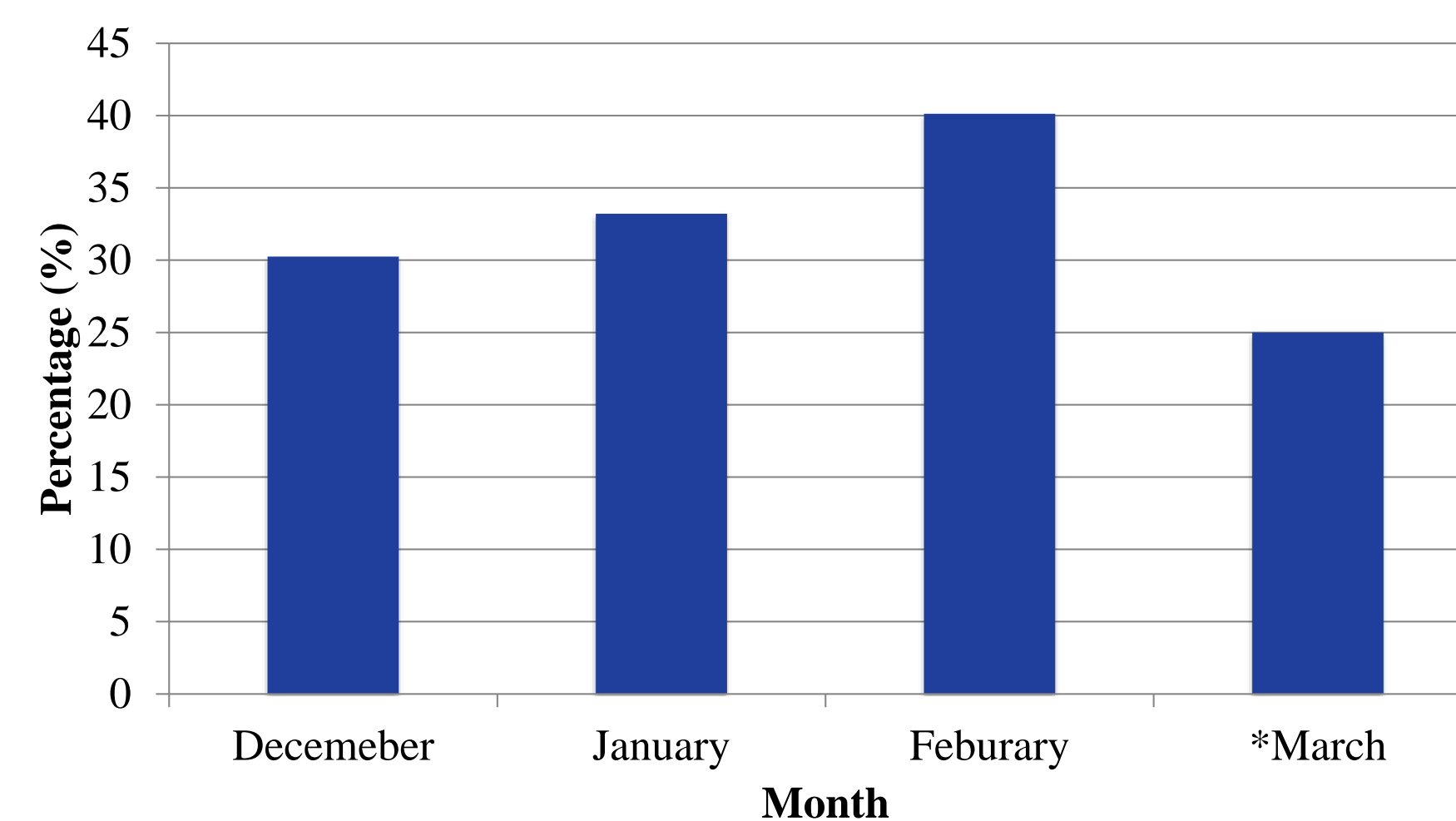


Figure 1. The graph depicts work productivity by month as the percentage of work completed by MB compared to a person without mental retardation in the same amount of time.
 *Limited work productivity in March was likely due to insufficient materials available for MB to complete during his testing session.

Conclusion

- The results of this case study indicates workplace wellness programming can be an effective strategy to improve BMI and work productivity

Literature Cited

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