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Tital: Attitudes towards health promotion practices in pre-registered nurses: relationship with body weight and self- perception

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Background: Nurses report inadequacies in health promotion practices and recognise their own lifestyle choices influences their willingness to give health promotion advice.

Aims: Investigate attitudes towards health eating promotion and relationships with self-perception and weight in pre- registered nurses.

Method: Questionnaire survey with 535 pre-registered nurses. Measures included individual health behaviours and weight status, self-perception, attitudes towards health promotion and nurses as role models for health.

Results: Pre-registered nurses (87.7%) felt strongly that nurses should be role models for health, those who disagreed were more likely to be overweight/obese. Nurses self-rated their own diets as healthy, yet 83.2% of nurses reported eating less than 5 portions of fruit and vegetables daily. Poor body image was prevalent (68%) with those who were overweight, obese or reporting poor dietary practices being most body dissatisfied. Self-esteem was lower in nurses with unhealthy weight. Most nurses (80.6%) felt patients would follow their health promotion advice better if they were seen to follow it themselves, but 54.9% would find it hard to promote a health behaviour they did not personally practice. The majority (90.3%) felt that felt health promotion practice is currently inadequate.

Conclusion: Many pre-registered nurses exhibit poor diets and unhealthy weight; this is inconsistent with their prevailing view that personal health impacts on their patient care. Those with poor diet or overweight have poor self-perception. Intervention is needed to support pre-registered nurses in making healthy lifestyle choices, reducing overweight/obesity and improving self-perception. Research should investigate the influence of intervention on health promotion practices.