

Bulldogs Active: Feasibility and acceptability of a gender-focused weight loss and health promotion program for women 35-64 years in south western Sydney (SWS)

Sarah Cavallin¹, Kate McBride², Tony Rossi¹ & Emma S. George¹

¹School of Health Sciences, Western Sydney University, Australia; ² School of Medicine, Western Sydney University, Australia

INTRODUCTION

- Rates of obesity and chronic disease amongst women in Australia are growing.¹
- Women are disproportionately affected by the determinants of health e.g., gender.²
- The National Women's Health Strategy 2020-2030 highlights the need for commitment to improving women's health particularly through development of interventions designed to target physical and emotional health.³
- The potential of professional sporting organisations as settings to attract people to participate in health promotion initiatives has increasingly been recognised.⁴

Aims:

- To develop and test the feasibility and acceptability of the Bulldogs Active program.
- To test the efficacy of the intervention on physical health outcomes including weight, physical activity, waist circumference, and blood pressure.

METHODS

Participants:

- A total of **18 women** (mean [±SD] age = 49.1 [± 7.4 years]) who lived and/or worked in the SWS region consented to take part.

Procedures:

- Single arm pre-post study
- 12 weekly face-to-face sessions
- Friday evenings at Canterbury League Club
- 90 - minute duration
- **Education components:**
 - Women's health
 - Physical activity
 - Nutrition
 - Mental health/Positive psychology
- **Physical Activity components:**
 - Light to moderate intensity
 - Pilates, belly-dancing, strength-based and cardio-based circuits

Data collection:

- Data was collected on the following:
 - Attendance and retention rates
 - Process evaluation (e.g., program satisfaction and benefits)
 - Anthropometric measurements (i.e., weight, waist circumference, BMI, physical activity, and blood pressure)

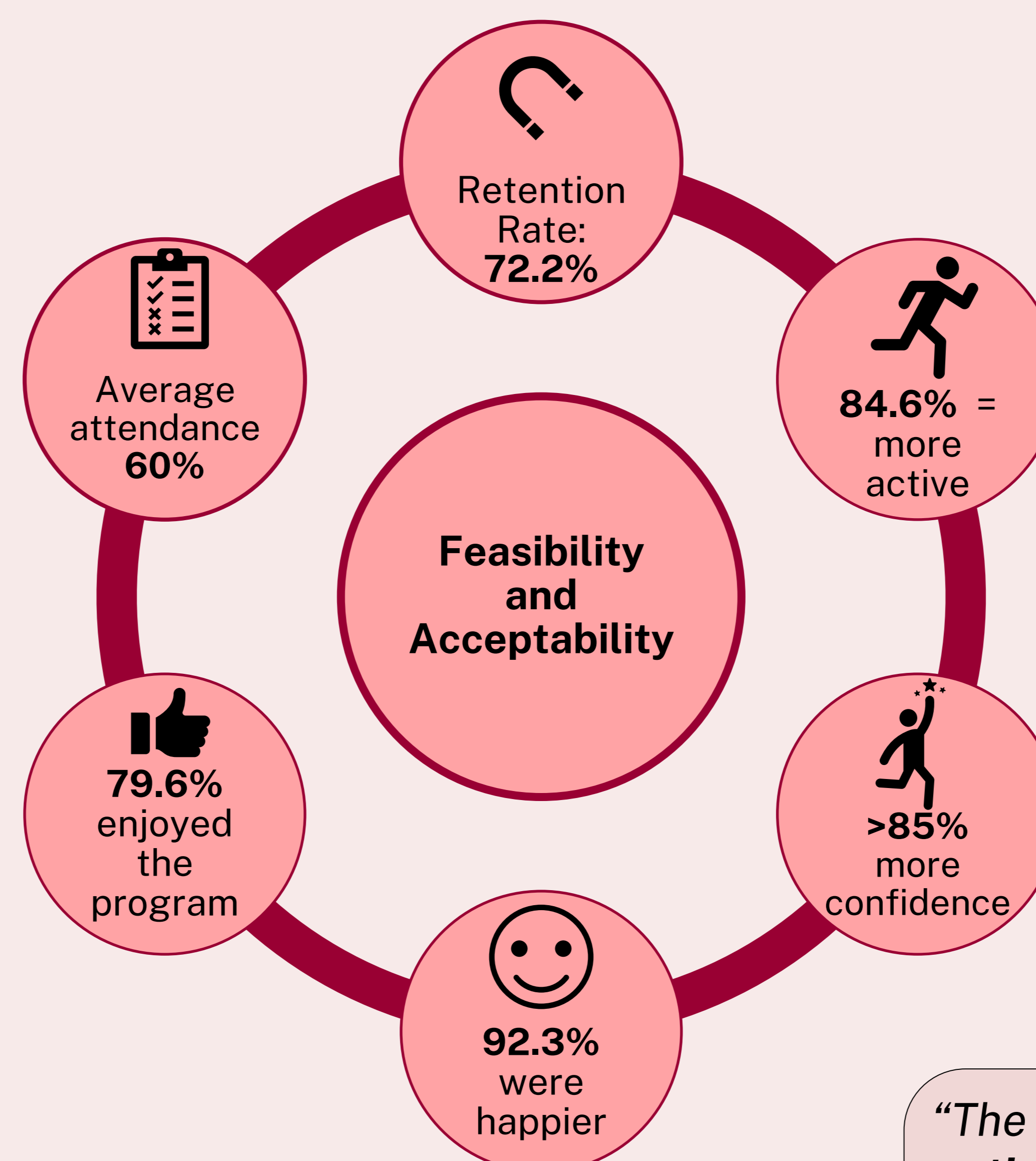
Data analysis:

- Descriptive statistics and paired sample t-tests using SPSS 29.0
- Reflexive thematic analysis

Acknowledgement – Sarah was supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship and received a Club Grant from the Canterbury League Club. My co-authors and I acknowledge that we have no conflict of interest of relevance to the submission of this abstract.

RESULTS

Key findings: Feasibility and acceptability



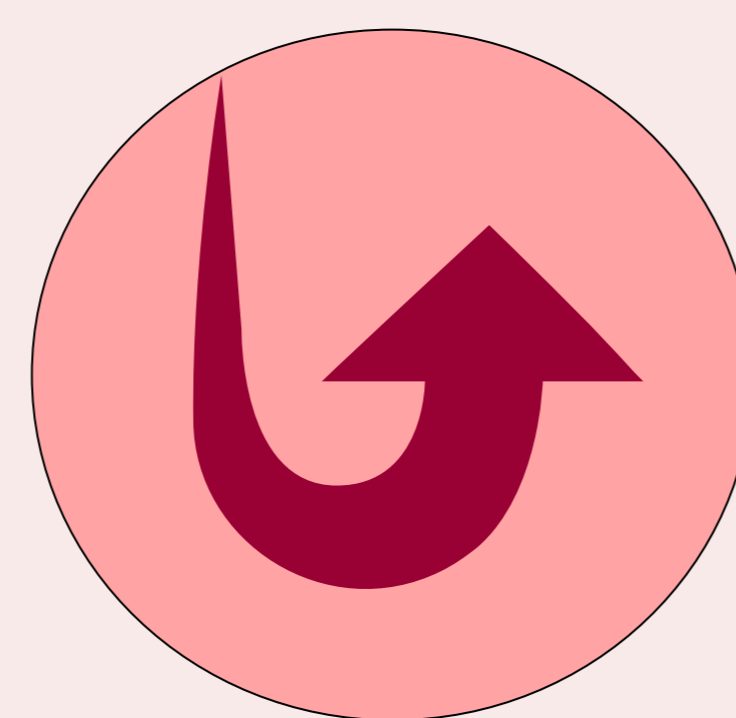
BULLDOGS Active



"The leaders/facilitators were very patient and understanding and took into account our age, health issues, family/work commitments and struggles with reactivating our health. Please run this again." (Participant 4)

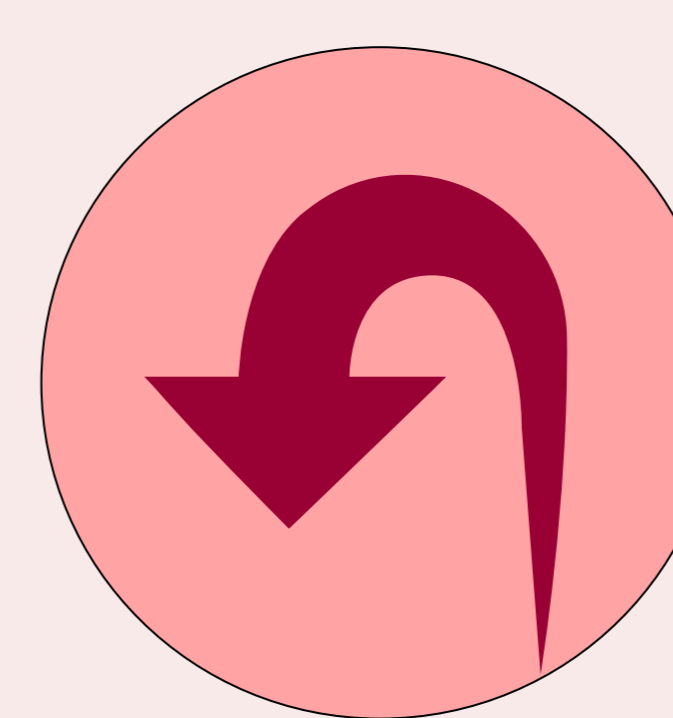
"Gave me the knowledge and confidence to enter the gym, as I was apprehensive about it. Now I've gotten into a regular pattern and look forward to attending gym." (Participant 8)

Key findings: Health outcomes



Increases in:

- Light physical activity
- Moderate to vigorous physical activity
- Steps



Decreases in:

- Weight
- BMI
- Waist circumference
- Blood pressure
- Sedentary time

Scan to contact author



CONCLUSIONS

- The findings of this study indicate that a gender-focused weight loss and health promotion program for middle-aged women is both feasible and acceptable.
- The Bulldogs Active program also showed some preliminary efficacy in improving health outcomes.

REFERENCES

1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2019). The health of Australia's females. (Cat. No. PHE 240). Canberra, Australia: AIHW. Retrieved from <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/men-women/female-health/contents/who-are>
2. Ervin, J., Taouk, Y., Alfonso, L. F., Hewitt, B., & King, T. (2022). Gender differences in the association between unpaid labour and mental health in employed adults: a systematic review. *The Lancet Public Health*, 7(9), e775-e786.
3. Australian Government Department of Health. (2019). National women's health strategy 2020-2030. Retrieved from <https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021/05/national-women-s-health-strategy-2020-2030.pdf>
4. George, E. S., El Masri, A., Kwasnicka, D., Romeo, A., Cavallin, S., Bennie, A., Kolt, G. S., & Guagliano, J. M. (2022). Effectiveness of Adult Health Promotion Interventions Delivered Through Professional Sport: Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Sports Medicine*, 52(11), 2637-2655.



WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

