

# Presentation Abstracts

## Theme 1: Innovation in models of care

**Ms Joanna Poon, Ballarat Community Health**    *joannap@bchc.org.au*

**Abstract title:**    *A non-diet approach to sustainable change in community health (HEAL™ program)*

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**Introduction:** The Healthy Eating Activity and Lifestyle program (HEAL™) was developed by Macarthur Division of General Practice and takes a no-diet philosophy towards weight management. Ballarat Community Health (BCH) ran the 8 week education program with exercise sessions targeted at the general community and mental health groups, including additional support and health coaching.

**Objectives:**

- To promote and improve healthy eating and nutrition knowledge.
- To support participants to establish regular or increase physical activity.
- To develop an understanding of the psychology of eating.
- To promote measures of success other than weight.

**Methods/Approach:** Trained allied health clinicians ran the HEAL™ program 3 times at BCH in 2015. Eating and physical activity data was collected before and after the program and at 5-month and 12-month follow-ups. Feedback forms were collected to gain qualitative data.

**Results/Practice implication:** 22 participants completed the HEAL™ program in 2015. After the 8-week program, 7/22 participants lost weight and 6/22 maintained their weight loss. 3/22 reduced blood pressure. 5/22 and 4/22 increased vegetable and fruit intake respectively. 10/22 increased or established regular physical activity. Participants report greater knowledge about health and feel more confident and supported in achieving their health goals.

**Conclusion:** The HEAL™ Program has proven effective in encouraging participants to kick-start their health goals in a sustainable approach. In the midst of weight loss programs and fad diets promising quick-fix results, the HEAL™ program encourages the community to look beyond weight as a sole measure of success. Participants develop life skills to maintain a healthy lifestyle thereby reducing their risk of chronic lifestyle conditions.

**References:**

1. Exercise Sports Science Australia. 2016. The HEAL Program. [ONLINE] Available at:<https://www.essa.org.au/for-gps/heal-program/>. [Accessed 03 February 16]
2. The Department of Health. 2012. Healthy Eating, Activity and Lifestyle Program (HEAL). [ONLINE] Available:

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## **Biography**

Joanna has been employed as a community health dietitian for 3 years in both rural and metropolitan regions. She has a Bachelor of Nutrition and Dietetics from Monash University. She has an interest in lifestyle education programs that promote success other than weight loss that include modifying eating behaviours and habits.