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REVIEW



# Introduction of the transtheoretical model and organisational development theory in weight management: A narrative review

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## KEYWORDS

The transtheoretical model;  
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**Summary** Overweight and obesity are serious public health and medical problems among children and adults worldwide. Behavioural change has been demonstrably contributory to weight management programs. Behavioural change-based weight loss programs require a theoretical framework. We will review the transtheoretical model and the organisational development theory in weight management. The transtheoretical model is a behaviour theory of individual level frequently used for weight management programs. The organisational development theory is a more complicated behaviour theory that applies to behavioural change on the system level. Both of these two theories have their respective strengths and weaknesses. In this manuscript, we try to introduce the transtheoretical model and the organisational development theory in the context of weight loss programs among population that are overweight or obese. Ultimately, we wish to present a new framework/strategy of weight management by integrating these two theories together.

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## Introduction

The mechanisms of overweight and obesity are quite complex and not fully understood. According to data from the Health Promotion Administration, Ministry of Health and Welfare in Taiwan, 44.1% of the adult (age over 18) population is either overweight (with BMI higher or equal than 24 kg/m<sup>2</sup>) or obese (with BMI higher or equal than 27 kg/m<sup>2</sup>) [1]. The BMI cut points for overweight and obese in Taiwan are different than the Asian or WHO criteria due to the different metabolic risks of Asians or Caucasian counterparts at similar BMIs [2]. The prevalence of overweight and obesity among females is 36.9%, while that among males is 50.8% [1]. The overall percentage of overweight and obesity in Taiwan is the highest among all Asian countries [1]. Thus, overweight and obesity had become a serious issue for adults in Taiwan. Many studies have shown that individual behavioural or lifestyle change is a common strategy for weight management [3–5]. However, successful weight loss and maintain a normal range of weight for long-term is very difficult and complicated. According to the ecological model [6], the strategies of weight management may be addressed by five different levels: individual (knowledge, attitude, and skill), interpersonal (formal and informal social networks), institutional (organisations and social institutions), community (relationships among organisations), and public policy (local, state, and national laws and policies) [6]. The strategies of personal behavioural or lifestyle change may belong to the individual level because it related to person's knowledge, attitude, and skill. Successful weight management programs may not only require strategies from individual level but may also require interpersonal, organisational, community, and public policy strategies [6]. However, to conduct a weight management program

that combining all five levels of the ecological model requires so many effects and resources. Instead, we chose the following two theories, the transtheoretical model and the organisational development theory, to provide an alternative and practical framework for weight management. The transtheoretical model and the organisational development theory are two different levels of health behaviour theories. The transtheoretical model is a theory at the individual level and the organisational development theory may be classified in the institutional level [7]. These two theories each has its advantages and disadvantages when they are used as frameworks for weight loss programs. The benefit of combining these two theories is that there can support each other to achieve more chance of successful on weight management program. By introducing these theories at two different levels, clinical practitioners and behavioural scientists can design proper weight loss programs for different contexts. The article will further introduce two theories' scope in relation to targets of change and the implicit assumptions of theories, the constituent elements and the integration framework of two theories for future weight loss programs will be discussed.

## The scope of transtheoretical model and organisational development theory

### The scope of the transtheoretical model

The transtheoretical model assesses the readiness of a person to change [8]. The model explains different stages, processes, decision, and self-efficacy of healthy behaviours and then to make individual interventions for the person [8]. It was emerged from an observation of smoke cessation

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