COMMENTARY

A strategy for obesity control: repetition is the key

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The prevalence of obesity is increasing in Japan and in many other countries; it presents a major public health issue because obesity is related to a variety of metabolic and cardiovascular diseases. Obesity is a fat-accumulating condition caused by an imbalance between energetic intake and output, as well as ineffective energy usage.¹ Thus, the strategy for controlling obesity is theoretically simple—that is, eat less and exercise more. However, this healthy lifestyle approach is often unsuccessful in controlling obesity. The development of an effective and simple program for the prevention of obesity and metabolic syndrome is emerging.² There have been only a limited number of anti-obesity programs that have been validated by randomized and controlled studies.^{3,4} Because socio-cultural backgrounds

differ among areas and countries, a case-specific strategy for promoting healthy lifestyles might provide improved results.¹ The study by Munakata *et al.*⁵ in this issue uses a randomized trial and clearly demonstrates that, in comparison with single counseling, repeated counseling provides improved health effects for Japanese workers. Interestingly, the effects observed in this study were most evident in waist circumference and fasting blood sugar levels, but were not related to blood pressure. This result suggests that the repeated-counseling strategy in this study for controlling obesity might have some limitations for preventing hypertension. Furthermore, because obese study subjects frequently re-gain weight, the long-term effects of this strategy should be clarified in future studies.⁶

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- 4 Maruyama C, Kimura M, Okumura H, Hayashi K, Arai T. Effect of a worksite-based intervention program on metabolic parameters in middle-aged male white-collar workers: a randomized controlled trial. *Prev Med* 2010; **51**: 11–17.
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