

Implementing a community-based diabetes prevention programme in Ireland

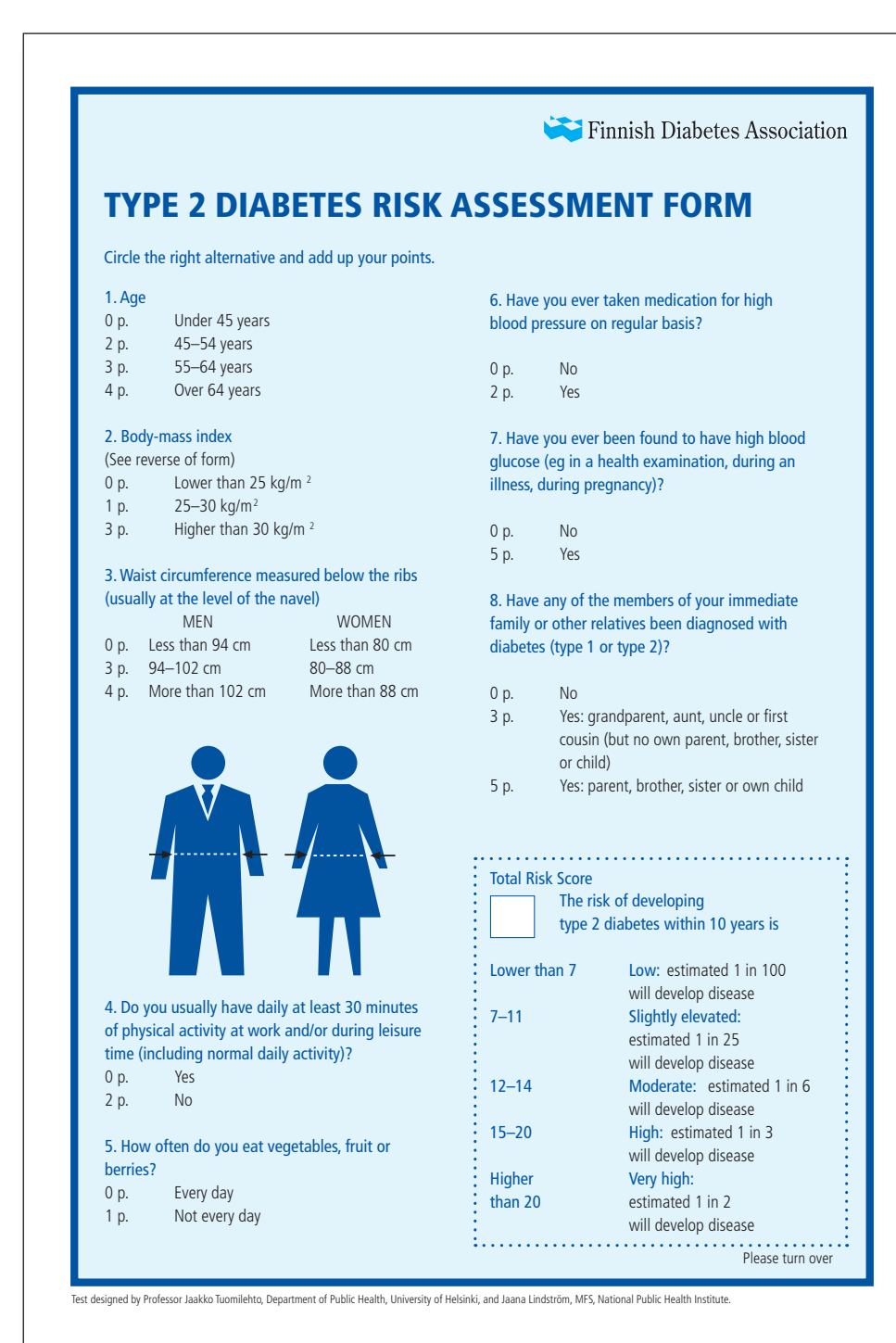
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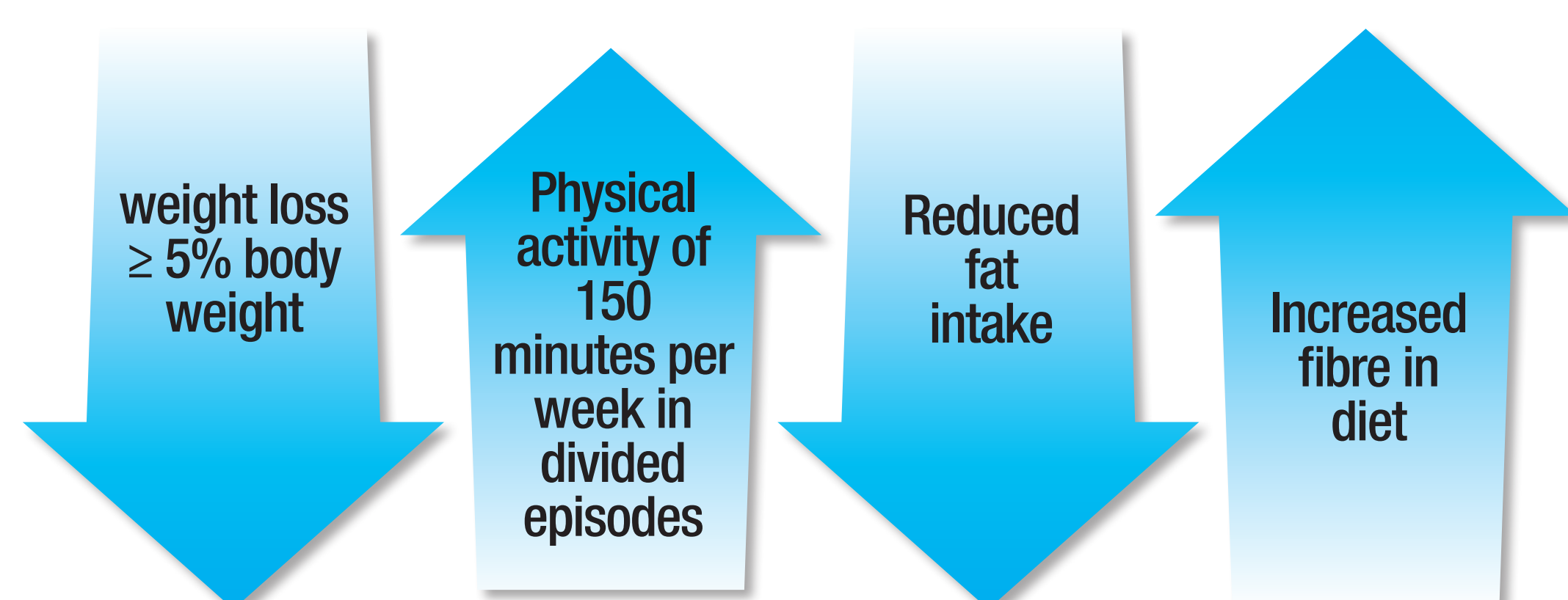
Aim: To provide a comprehensive community-based diabetes prevention programme in a rural setting.

Background: The Mizen primary care team in West Cork are pioneering a programme of diabetes prevention. Primary care teams in Ireland are an inter-disciplinary team-based approach to primary care provision. The team consists of community nurses, general practitioners, practice nurses, an occupational therapist, a physiotherapist, dietician, community welfare officer and a speech and language therapist.

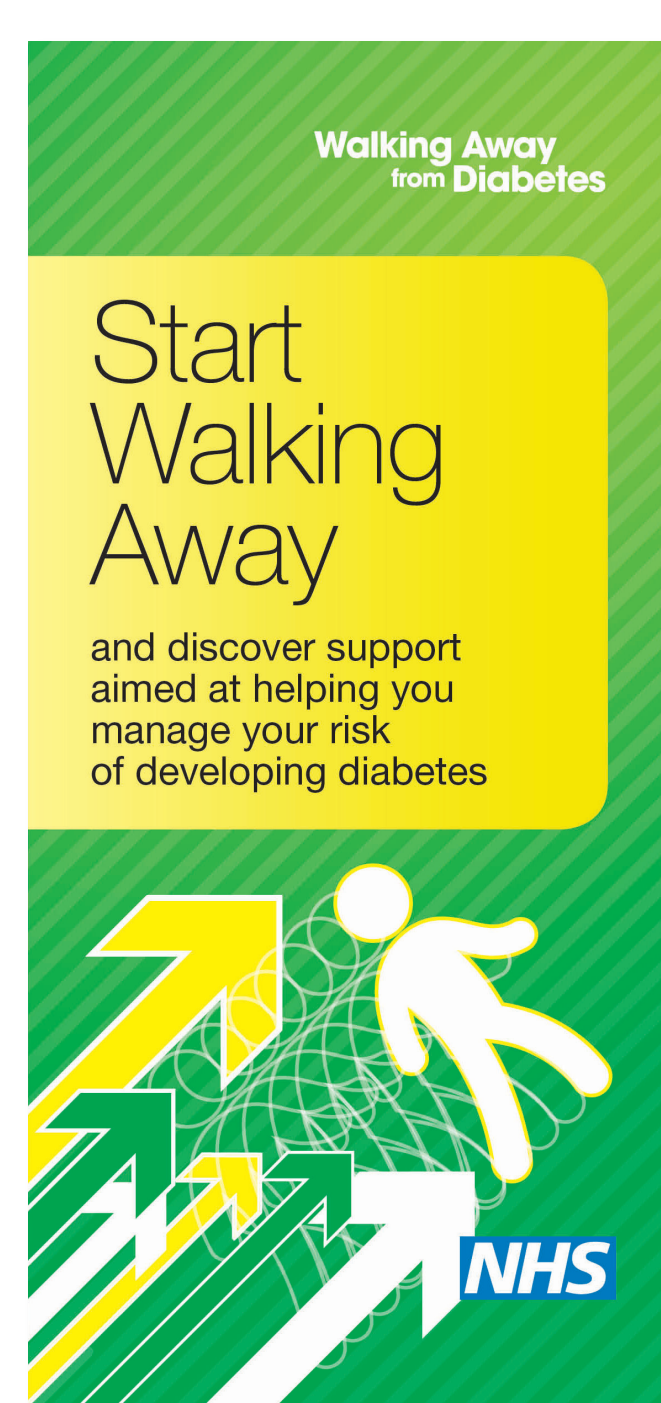
Clients can be assessed by any of the primary care team using the Finnish Diabetes Risk Score (FINDRISK). This predicts the 10 year risk for developing T2 diabetes with 85% accuracy. Initially the clients were risk scored and if their risk was above 15 they were scheduled for an oral glucose tolerance test and lipid profile with the practice nurse. If the clients’ results showed impaired glucose tolerance or impaired fasting glucose they were referred to the diabetes prevention clinic for support in achieving lifestyle changes.



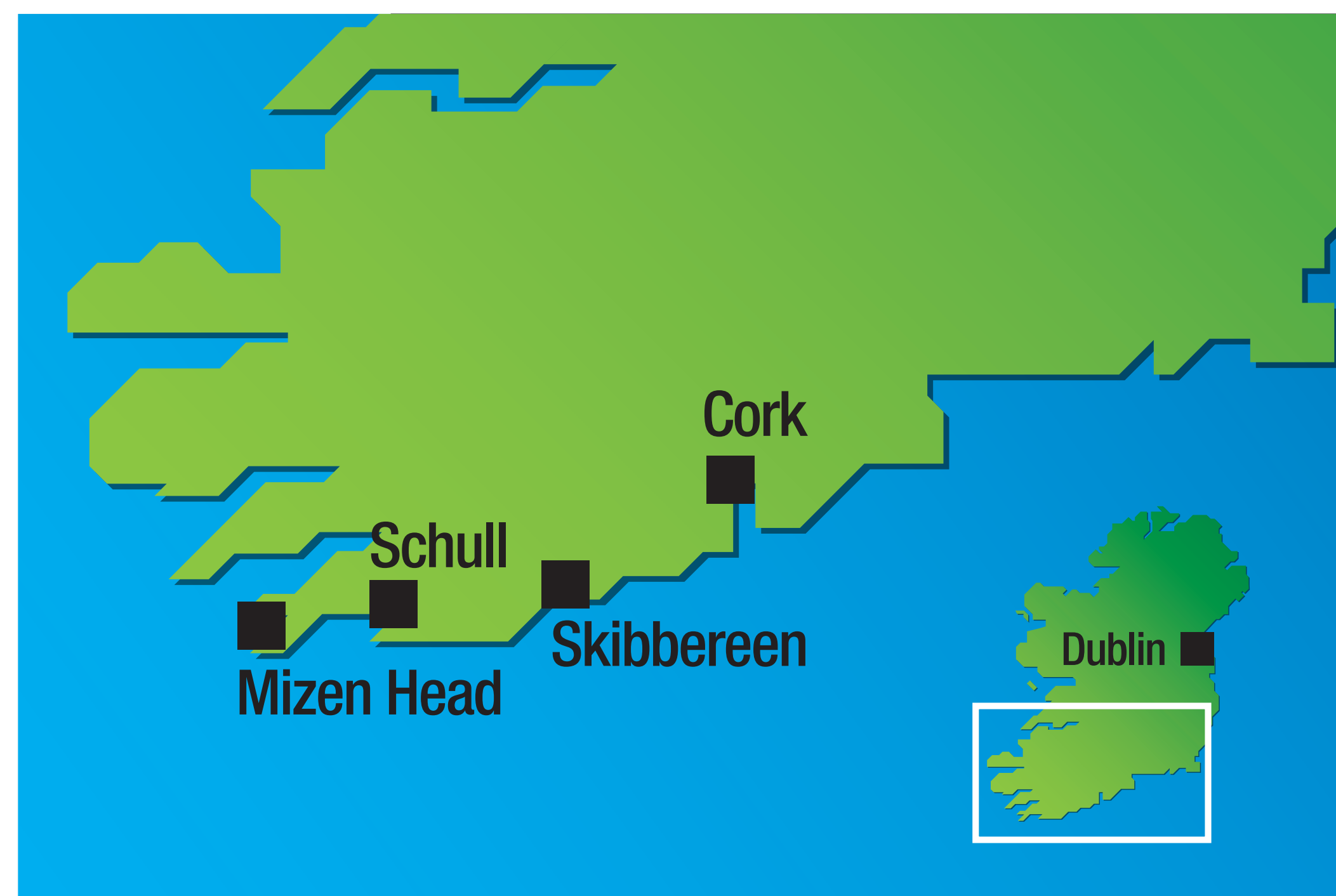
The goal of the lifestyle changes programme is to facilitate the clients in achieving the following;



We realised that those clients whose score was between 12 and 15 were still at risk but that one to one intervention was too costly for this group. We needed a ‘one off’ intervention to provide them with the information and tools to make lifestyle changes. We therefore approached the DESMOND group who were developing a new module on diabetes prevention called ‘Walk Away from Diabetes’. This is a 3hour group session offering education to support behaviour change, focusing predominantly on increasing physical activity and reducing saturated fat intake.



We became one of the early implementer sites along with Brighton NHS trust and Cumbria NHS trust. This trial ran from January 2010 to June 2010. We were able to provide this programme to all clients who were at risk of diabetes irrespective of whether they had impaired bloods.



Evaluation

The ‘Walking Away from Diabetes’ three hour programme had 140 clients attend between January 2010 to December 2010. The written evaluations of the patients who went through from the period January to May were analysed. Generally clients found the course useful, easy to follow, the messages were simple and the educators were facilitative.

“I found the Walking Away programme easy to follow, it was well explained. I have learnt a lot about risk of Diabetes.”

“Brilliant. Very easy to understand. Staff appreciable, likeable and enjoyed their job, so felt happier about it all. Presented well. Would recommend the event to anyone.”

“Excellent – know what to do when going shopping about all Saturated fats. Makes me more active.”

“Great educators, excellent programme, very informative – thank you.”

A telephone follow-up of the Walk Away participants found that 48 per cent of those surveyed were reaching the recommended 30min of exercise on most days of the week five to nine months later

Currently there are 60 clients registered on the one to one intervention programme and following the completion of 24 of those clients their biomedical data was analysed using paired two tailed test for significance. The results showed that the physiological markers of weight, oral glucose tolerance test, abdominal circumference and cholesterol post intervention were highly significant

Conclusions/Summary

The development of a programme which aims at preventing diabetes has been welcomed by both clinicians and clients. It is undeniable that there could not be a better time for preventative medicine given the cost of complications of diabetes to the health service in Ireland i.e. the HSE (Health Service Executive). Using both the one-on-one sessions and the ‘Walk away from diabetes programme’ enables us to utilise the high cost intervention for those at highest risk, while providing a sound educational programme for all clients at risk.

