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“I want to feel good about myself”: Motivations for Weight Loss Among Black Women Enrolled in a Pilot Weight Loss Intervention in Brooklyn, NY.

Background/Objectives: Compared to other racial and ethnic groups, Black women have a higher prevalence of obesity. Understanding motivations for weight loss is paramount to tailoring interventions and reducing health disparities.

Methods: Participants who self-described as overweight or obese and who were enrolled in a pilot weight loss intervention were recruited. Individual qualitative interviews were integrated into baseline assessments of Afro-Caribbean and African American women enrolled in a pilot weight loss intervention. Participants were asked to describe their motivations for wanting to lose weight. A codebook was drafted, and in-vivo responses were independently coded into concepts and categories by two trained coders. Discrepancies were discussed until a consensus was reached, and the codebook was refined. Data was coded using Cloud Atlas.ti software.

Results: A total of 36 women were recruited, their average age was 51 +14, and BMI was 36 +5.52. Motivations for loss weight were categorized as: health-related reasons, appearance-related reasons, socioeconomic impact, and quality of life. Among this cohort of Black women, motivations for weight loss were multifactorial and emanated from a desire to improve health, self-perception, and family interactions. Participants noted obesity’s association with their comorbid health conditions and identify their weight as a barrier to participating in recreational activities with their family.

Conclusions/Implications: Understanding individual motivations for weight loss has implications for tailoring future weight loss interventions and can inform patient-centered counseling at SUNY Downstate.