



Media Release

Graylands Hospital, Mount Claremont, WA 6010
Telephone (08) 9346 7300

Fitter bodies for Graylands patients

31 March 2009

A popular computer fitness game is being credited for boosting the success of a physical activity initiative at Graylands Hospital with 36 participants successfully shedding weight- one as much as 25 kilos.

The Well-Being Program run by the Physiotherapy Department involves the use of marked and measured walk tracks and structured exercises but the Nintendo Wii Fit program has proved most engaging in the program's first 12 months.

Head of Physiotherapy, Kevin Lau said he was delighted with the achievements of the men and women who took part.

"36 participants collectively lost 76.6 kilograms," said Kevin Lau. "The biggest weight loss for one was 27kg and another had an 18 centimetre reduction in his waist circumference."

"The participants who've achieved a healthier weight will benefit from a reduced risk of chronic diseases such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes and stroke," he said.

"In total we had 108 people take part in the first year. Much like weight loss in the community, not all were successful in losing weight and some left Graylands Hospital before we were able to do a final 'weigh in' but we will be looking for ways to further engage participants over the next 12 months. In those who did, we noticed positive changes in their general outlook."

Minister for Mental Health Dr Graham Jacobs said the program has produced excellent results and believes it to be influential in promoting positive lifestyle factors for inpatients suffering with mental illness.

"The program targets physical wellbeing and enhanced quality of life through the promotion of physical activity and healthy eating," said Dr Jacobs.

"The physiotherapy team are to be commended for helping patients to achieve such life sustaining results," he said.

At the 2008 Mental Health Good Outcomes Awards, Graylands Physiotherapy was recognised as the first WA Department of Health facility to pioneer the use of the computer technology to enhance health and fitness outcomes and to achieve such results in Mental Health.

"Computer games like this provide a means of motivating patients who may not otherwise engage in a great deal of physical activity, said Mr Lau.

As one of the participants Sam* said: "The console is a lot of fun. My favourite is tennis, where I use a racquet that comes with the console to play against my on-screen opponents. I swing the racquet to try to hit the ball as hard as I can to outsmart my competitors," said Sam.

The best thing about it is that I build up a sweat - and I don't know it," he said.

Mr Lau said that staff regularly measure and monitor heart rates and oxygen saturation levels by using a pulse oximeter.

“We have seen increases in heart rates when participants use Wii which prove that therapeutic benefits are realised,” he said..

The physiotherapy department held a Well-Being Program Anniversary lunch for participants to celebrate the program’s success.

Not the patient’s real name

[Caption] Mr Kevin Lau with a physiotherapy patient.

Media Contact: Kristen Taylor, 9346 7300.