What was the research about?
Obesity can lead to serious health problems such as diabetes and heart disease. Doctors often have limited time to provide weight loss support during clinic visits.

In this study, the research team wanted to learn if a weight loss program offered at clinics, called the intensive lifestyle intervention, or ILI, helped patients lose weight. In ILI, patients worked with trained health coaches. The team compared patients in ILI with those receiving usual care.

What were the results?
After two years, compared with patients receiving usual care, patients in ILI

- Lost 4.5 percent more weight and lost 4.5 more kilograms
- Lost five more centimeters from their waist
- Had lower total cholesterol and higher healthy cholesterol
- Had improvements in some aspects of quality of life, such as self-esteem, sexual life, work, and fatigue

The two groups didn't differ in blood pressure, unhealthy cholesterol, fat levels in the blood, how satisfied they were with their health care, and other aspects of quality of life such as pain or sleep.

Who was in the study?
The study included 803 patients with obesity. Of these, 67 percent were African American, 26 percent were White, and 7 percent reported another race. The average age was 49, and 84 percent were women. All received care at one of 18 primary care clinics in Louisiana.

What did the research team do?
The research team assigned clinics by chance to offer ILI or usual care. In ILI, patients met with health coaches in person or by phone. Coaches worked with patients to create short-term goals and action plans. Patients could also attend at least 40 education sessions with health coaches. The sessions were weekly for 6 months, then monthly for 18 months. Session topics included exercise, stress management, and portion control. Patients in ILI received a pedometer, a scale, a meal plan, and pre-packaged meals in the first month of the study and as needed for the rest of the study. Using an online system, the team gave patients and coaches real-time feedback about weight loss and daily goals. Also, patients’ doctors attended an education program about helping patients manage their weight.

Patients receiving usual care had regular visits with their doctor and received three health information newsletters each year.

Patients took surveys about managing their weight and had in-person visits to assess weight and other
outcomes at the start of the study and again 6, 12, 18, and 24 months later.

Three patient advisory boards gave input on the study.

**What were the limits of the study?**
Most patients were women. Two clinics had fewer patients than the other clinics in the study. Results may have differed if more patients at these clinics took part in the study.

Future research could test ILI in other locations.

**How can people use the results?**
Clinics and health insurers can use the results when considering ways to help patients manage their weight.

_To learn more about this project, visit [www.pcori.org/Katzmarzyk358](http://www.pcori.org/Katzmarzyk358)._