

Body weight and obesity are growing at increasing rates in the USA with negative health implications. College students are particularly vulnerable to weight gain and increased dieting behaviors. This research examines the effects of a 12-week online undergraduate weight and health management course, VTrim, on students' self-esteem as a function of their motivation to enroll in the course. A series of questionnaires was administered before, during, and after the Fall 2010 VTrim course to assess participants' motivation, self-esteem, and weight. We hypothesized that the specific nature of a student's motivation to enroll in the course would moderate the relationship between weight change and self esteem. A series of t-tests and correlational analyses revealed that there was no significant relationship between weight loss and change in self-esteem, regardless of participant motivation. However, participants with a primary motivation to lose weight began the study with lower self-esteem and showed a trend toward both more variability and improvement in self-esteem, regardless of weight loss.