

University of Wollongong

## Research Online

---

Faculty of Science, Medicine and Health -  
Papers: part A

Faculty of Science, Medicine and Health

---

1-1-2014

### Active engagement of consumers in a healthy lifestyle program: outcomes of a multidisciplinary pilot project in a mental health rehabilitation unit

Angela Douglas

*University of Wollongong, [adouglas@uow.edu.au](mailto:adouglas@uow.edu.au)*

Christopher Patterson

*University of Wollongong, [cpatters@uow.edu.au](mailto:cpatters@uow.edu.au)*

Sarah Watson

*Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District*

Elise Gruber

*Wollongong Hospital*

Alex Gagan

*Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/smhpapers>



Part of the [Medicine and Health Sciences Commons](#), and the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Douglas, Angela; Patterson, Christopher; Watson, Sarah; Gruber, Elise; and Gagan, Alex, "Active engagement of consumers in a healthy lifestyle program: outcomes of a multidisciplinary pilot project in a mental health rehabilitation unit" (2014). *Faculty of Science, Medicine and Health - Papers: part A*. 2282. <https://ro.uow.edu.au/smhpapers/2282>

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: [research-pubs@uow.edu.au](mailto:research-pubs@uow.edu.au)

---

## Active engagement of consumers in a healthy lifestyle program: outcomes of a multidisciplinary pilot project in a mental health rehabilitation unit

### Abstract

Paper abstract: Australian College of Mental Health Nurses 40th International Mental Health Nursing Conference - Honouring the Past, Shaping the Future, 7-9 October 2014, Melbourne, Vic Australia.

### Disciplines

Medicine and Health Sciences | Social and Behavioral Sciences

### Publication Details

Douglas, A., Patterson, C., Watson, S., Gruber, E. & Gagan, A. (2014). Active engagement of consumers in a healthy lifestyle program: outcomes of a multidisciplinary pilot project in a mental health rehabilitation unit. *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing*, 23 (Suppl. 1), 9-9.

# **ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT OF CONSUMERS IN A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE PROGRAM: OUTCOMES OF A MULTIDISCIPLINARY PILOT PROJECT IN A MENTAL HEALTH REHABILITATION UNIT**

Angela Douglas <sup>1</sup>, Christopher Patterson <sup>1</sup>, Elise Gruber <sup>2a</sup>, Sarah Watson <sup>2b</sup>  
and Alex Gagan <sup>2b</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Faculty of Science, Medicine and Health, University of Wollongong, NSW, Australia;* <sup>2</sup>*Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, NSW Australia* (<sup>a</sup>*The Wollongong Hospital,* <sup>b</sup>*Shellharbour Mental Health Rehabilitation Unit*)

The National Mental Health Commission identifies the physical health of those living with a mental illness as worse than the general community on just about every measure. This paper presents the results of a pilot healthy lifestyle program aimed at engaging consumers with targeted and individualised health activities within a recovery-orientated rehabilitation unit.

The ACTive program ran for 18 weeks in 2013, delivered by a team of mental health staff, dietitian, exercise physiologist, academic, and nursing and allied health students. Approval to evaluate the program was received through the Joint UOW/ISLHD Health and Medical HREC. Evaluation targeted quantitative physical health measures for consumers, and qualitative measures for consumers, staff and students. Preliminary results show a grouped average weight loss of 1.1kg, which has clinical significance given the weight-gain challenges associated with serious mental illness. Statistical comparison with a control group is currently underway. Consumers also improved in functional exercise capacity, with 80-metre average increase for the 6-Minute Walk Test, and 2.6 repetition increase in the Sit-to-Stand test for functional leg strength. Feedback provided has identified a number of key challenges to the sustainability and management of this type of program within current mental health service provision environments.

Targeted and individualised health programs integrated into mental health services have great potential to reduce the existing disparity in physical health. However, the capacity for collaborative involvement of multidisciplinary health professionals is critical. Furthermore, programs that foster allied health student placement may enhance vocational scope for allied health within mental health services.