Healthy Life Centres

A Healthy Life Centre (HLC) is an interdisciplinary primary health care service which offers effective, knowledge-based measures for people with, or in high risk of disease, who need support in health behaviour change and in coping health problems and chronic disease.

The HLC is part of the public health care service in the municipality. HLC programs have a patient centred approach and aim at strengthening the individual’s control of his or her own health. As a minimum HLCs offers participation in various exercise groups, and individually or group based counselling or courses for increased physical activity, healthy nutrition and tobacco cessation. Many HLCs also offer counselling, support and education on issues related to mental health, sleep and alcohol. In the municipality, the HCL functions as a resource-, knowledge- and contact centre for behaviour change, health promotion and disease prevention.

Cooperation with other municipal health care services, hospitals, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), private and public organisations and local authorities is of vital importance in order to provide continuous and integrated health care and help people to establish independent and lasting health enhancing habits. A key task for the HLC is to guide the participants into suitable and feasible local programs that they can continue with on their own after participation in the HLC. The HLCs should provide a good overview of such programs.

Results

Evaluations have shown that HLCs recruit people who do not seek or participate in other services such as fitness centres on their own. Participants need help to find appropriate services, build motivation and to create strategies for maintaining sustainable coping and behavior change. General practitioners who refer patients to HLCs are of the opinion that the HLCs offer good services. Studies indicate that participation in the programs can lead to improved physical fitness, weight loss and improved self-perceived health and quality of life, as well as maintaining health behaviour change one year after the follow-up.

References

2 Helgerud, J. and Eithun, G. Evaluering av fysisk aktivitet på resept i Nordland og Buskerud fylkeskommune. Hokksund Rehabiliteringssenter