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### **CUHK Develops Lifestyle Modification Program for Fatty Liver Patients 60% Patients Recovered Without Use of Drugs**

Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) is the most common chronic liver disease worldwide. It affects 27% of the Hong Kong population, 4% of which also suffers from severe liver fibrosis or cirrhosis. NAFLD is strongly associated with obesity and therefore the number of patients is rising with the growing trend of obesity in Hong Kong. There is currently no approved drug for the treatment of NAFLD. The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) has thus developed a lifestyle modification program for NAFLD patients to control the disease by dietary management and programmed exercises. The efficacy of the program was also verified by a randomized controlled trial. Results showed that over 60% of patients participating in the program recovered without use of drugs.

The lifestyle modification program is guided by dietitians and exercise instructors. Each patient was required to follow a customized diet comprising fruits and vegetables, moderate-carbohydrate, low-fat, low-glycaemic index and low-calorific products. The patients are also required to exercise 30 minutes a day, 3 to 5 times a week under the supervision of an exercise instructor. From 2008 to 2012, the Center for Liver Health, the Centre for Nutritional Studies and the Department of Imaging and Interventional Radiology of CUHK jointly conducted a randomized controlled trial to test the efficacy of a lifestyle modification program. 154 NAFLD patients were randomly assigned to join the lifestyle modification program or receive usual care.

After one year, 64% of patients participating in the lifestyle modification program had complete remission of NAFLD, compared to only 20% in the control group receiving usual care. The results of weight reduction of the two groups are tabulated below:-

	Lifestyle modification group	Usual care group
Average weight reduction	12.3 lbs	1.3 lbs
Weight reduction > 10%	39%	0%

The study showed that weight reduction was the key factor associated with remission of NAFLD. In the lifestyle modification group, 97% of patients who lost over 10% of body weight had complete remission of NAFLD.

The results indicated that the lifestyle modification program developed by CUHK focusing on customized diet and supervised exercise is an effective treatment for NAFLD. Members of the public who wish to register for the program can call the 24-hour automated telephone hotline at 3151-5600. Please visit <http://livercenter.com.hk> for more details.