



Question

Is intermittent fasting more effective for weight loss than a typical eating pattern when calorie intake is held constant?

Answer

No, intermittent fasting *without* caloric adjustment does not appear more effective for weight loss

Bottom Line

A controlled study revealed that intermittent fasting was no more effective for weight loss than a regular eating pattern when calorie intake was equal. However, in practical, real-world studies, intermittent fasting has shown greater effectiveness compared to a standard eating pattern.

Background

Published in *Annals of Internal Medicine*, "Effect of Isocaloric, Time-Restricted Eating on Body Weight in Adults With Obesity" (published on April 19, 2024) investigates whether time-restricted eating (TRE) promotes weight loss and improves glucose metabolism independently of calorie reduction in adults with obesity and prediabetes or diet-controlled diabetes.

Study Summary

In a controlled, isocaloric feeding experiment, 41 participants were assigned to either a TRE regimen (10-hour eating window with 80% of calories consumed before 1 PM) or a usual eating pattern (UEP) (\leq 16-hour window with 250% of calories consumed after 5 PM). Over 12 weeks, both groups consumed the same number of calories from meals prepared at the research facility. Results showed no significant difference in weight loss between the TRE (-2.3 kg (95% CI, 1.0 to 3.5 kg)) and UEP (-2.6 kg (95% CI, 1.5 to 3.7 kg)) groups or glycemic profiles between the TRE and UEP groups.

Key Considerations

- **Limited Generalizability:** Study composed of only 41 participants, the majority of whom were Black women, with noticeably differing starting weights (TRE = 95.6 kg (95% CI, 89.6 to 101.6 kg), UEP = 103.7 kg (95% CI, 95.3 to 112.0 kg)), and all study participants were given meals prepared by registered dietitians in the research facility.