

THE FIRST TWENTY FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

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ABSTRACT

Purpose and Aims: Assess the efficacy of an internet-based firefighter (FF) health and wellness program for volunteer fire departments using a cluster randomized controlled trial (CRCT) in a national sample of volunteer firefighters (VFF).

Relevance: Research has established a need for health and wellness programs tailored to the unique needs and culture of the volunteer fire service (VFS) as a means of improving readiness, decreasing injury, and preventing line of duty deaths related to cardiovascular disease. While the career fire service has the Wellness Fitness Initiative to guide their wellness efforts, there has been no intervention designed for the culture and needs of the VFS. Once proven successful, the proposed intervention will provide an immediately disseminable, cost effective, wellness intervention valued by VFFs.

Methods: A national sample of volunteer fire departments will be recruited for a 6 month, CRCT with a cross-over treatment design to determine the efficacy of The First Twenty (TF20), a wellness program focused on nutrition and fitness for FFs. Modifications to the existing TF20 will be made to enhance the health coaching features and include tools for program evaluation. Study outcomes (changes in weight, BMI, body fat percentage, waist circumference, dietary intakes, blood pressure, and fitness activities) will be assessed pre- and post-intervention.

Projected Results & Conclusions: This will be the first internet-based, occupationally tailored health and wellness program implemented for the VFS. TF20 will be an essential cost effective, tool to address the epidemic of unhealthy body composition, nutrition and fitness among VFFs.