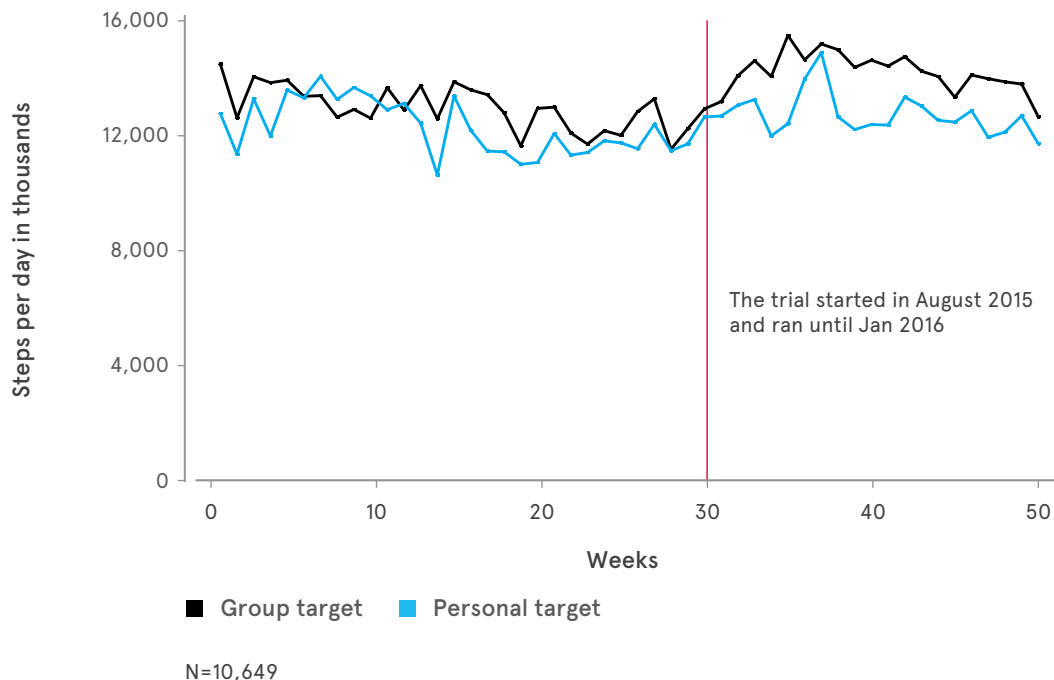


Figure 10.1: Steps per day, by type of target set (personalised or group)



In addition to the trials, one of the most innovative elements of the partnership was supporting VicHealth’s Citizen’s Jury on Obesity. Around 100 Victorians were randomly selected to be the jurors and put through a multi-stage process to ensure that they were a descriptively representative sample. Jurors were given access to more than 60 background papers on obesity from a range of interest groups, including papers prepared especially for the jury that set out some of the behavioural evidence on the drivers of obesity. After six weeks of online deliberation, the jurors were brought together for a weekend of discussion in the city of Melbourne. The jurors themselves were able to choose and vote on experts that they particularly wanted to hear from.

Towards the end of the weekend, jurors drafted, and then voted on ‘asks’ that they would like to make. To make it into the final report ‘asks’ had to achieve at least 80 per cent support among the group. The jury’s report contained 20 ‘asks’ of government, industry and civil society. These were presented to a stakeholder steering group for a direct response.

VicHealth's Citizens' Jury on Obesity proved effective, decisive and moving. The Victorians that were selected for the process came from all walks of life and from across the state. During the weekend of face-to-face deliberations, the jurors threw themselves into the topic with seriousness and diligence. The 20 plus 'asks' that made it through, far from being the confused or weak list that some had feared, were coherent and strong.³⁸ It is too early to conclude whether these recommendations will be fully implemented, but the process showed policymakers, retailers and producers that they may be substantially misreading, and perhaps underestimating, public support for interventions like a sugar tax. It also laid to rest the arguments that issues like obesity are too complex for the public to understand and that a jury of citizens would act in a narrow and self-interested way. Perhaps, even more importantly, it has shown governments across the world how such an approach can be used to consult the public using behavioural evidence, whilst pushing the frontiers of combining both online and in-person debate.

Encouraging people to get more active

The work with VicHealth helped to inspire a larger programme of trials aimed at unpacking various aspects of group motivation to exercise more. In this context, we were fortunate to be contacted by the Movember Foundation, which since 2003 has raised £402 million and funded around 1,000 projects focused on tackling prostate cancer, testicular cancer, poor mental health and physical activity.

Movember put BIT in touch with Lendlease, who offer employees subsidised FitBits to help them track their performance. They are then encouraged to take further exercise. Our challenge, for Movember 2015, was to devise new ways of increasing levels of physical activity and to use the FitBit devices to measure individuals' daily step count.

Fifty teams (totalling 646 individuals) had been competing in a step challenge. We randomly assigned the teams into two groups, who each received different kinds of feedback. The first group received generic leaderboard information that told them which teams were in the lead. The second group received personalised team performance information that told them what their current rank was as a team, how far they were from the lead team and who the most active individuals in the team were.

The participants' progress was then monitored over three weeks, with one message sent at the beginning of each week. We were interested in the number of steps reached, the amount of energy expended and the number of active minutes.

The personalised team feedback intervention significantly outperformed the generic leaderboard information against each of the outcome measures. It was particularly effective at increasing the activity of women and the effect was strongest for those who were least active.