

An article* reported on a study in which 160 volunteers were randomly assigned to one of four popular diet plans: Atkins, Ornish, Weight Watchers, and Zone (40 subjects per diet). These subjects were recruited through newspaper and television advertisements in the greater Boston area; all were overweight or obese with body mass index values between 27 and 42. Among the variables recorded were:

- which diet the subject was assigned to
- whether or not the subject completed the twelve-month study
- the subject's initial weight (in kilograms)
- the degree to which the subject adhered to the assigned diet, taken as the average of 12 monthly ratings, each on a 1-10 scale (with 1 indicating complete non-adherence and 10 indicating full adherence)
- the subject's weight after 12 months (in kilograms)
- the subject's weight loss after twelve months (in kilograms, with a negative value indicating weight gain)