

Abstract Title

Evaluation of mobile apps that promote health behaviour change. Can these be adapted for use in dietetic practice in Newfoundland and Labrador?

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Abstract

Purpose: To identify current mobile health (mHealth) promoting technologies and cultivate a summary of recommendations for the development of a mobile application intended to support individuals with healthy eating behaviour change within Newfoundland and Labrador (NL).

Process or Summary of Content: A selection of mHealth apps that emphasize weight and calorie counting are presently available. Research is limited on their accuracy, success, and long term usefulness. Furthermore, these apps have minimal focus on healthy eating and behaviour change. Individuals are more likely to be successful making positive dietary changes when they are able to identify their goals via a client-centered approach. mHealth apps can motivate and support clients, resulting in improved self-efficacy with achieving personalized goals.

Systematic Approach Used, including supporting information: An environmental scan and analysis of existing technologies (i.e. mobile apps, websites, etc.) that focus on health promoting behaviors was searched using CADTH, PubMed and Google Scholar. A literature review was conducted on motivation and other factors influencing behaviour change. Consultation with national, provincial, and local stakeholders provided qualitative data pertaining to the feasibility and level of interest in the development and implementation of this type of technology.

Conclusions: At present there are limited applications available that meet the needs of the individual while supporting the work of dietitians. Introducing a mHealth application into dietetic practice in NL is a cost-effective method to improve healthy eating and enhance dietetic services province wide.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the government of NL invest in the development of a mHealth application tailored to support dietetic practice and individuals who are working to improve their eating behaviour.

Significance to the Field of Dietetics: The findings have been translated into recommendations for the development and implementation of a mHealth application targeted at improving healthy eating within NL. This technology will foster a client-centered approach to behaviour change related to healthy eating.