

CLAHRC BITE

Brokering Innovation Through Evidence

23 A bite-sized summary of a piece of research supported by NIHR CLAHRC West Midlands

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Further research needed to establish how text-based weight management services can be altered to support behaviour change

Evaluation of an SMS-based weight maintenance programme 'Lighten Up Plus'

Background

- Rates of obesity in the UK have more than doubled in the past 25 years, with Health Survey for England 2009 data revealing that almost a quarter of adults were obese.
- At present, 12-week commercial and NHS-provided weight management programmes are available and often free to overweight or obese people. These programmes have been shown to produce weight loss, but subsequent weight regain is common.
- Previous evidence produced by the same research group demonstrated that commercial slimming clubs, such as Weight Watchers, were more effective than 'own grown' programmes developed by General Practices and recommended that local practices disinvest in 'own grown' services in favour of commercially provided services.
- This study hypothesised that SMS-text messages may be a low-cost method of delivering regular prompts to encourage self-weighing, reducing weight regain following weight-loss programmes.

Findings:

- The study recruited 380 participants who had attended a free 12-week commercial slimming club (Rosemary Conley, Slimming World or Weight Watchers).
- Participants were randomly allocated to receive either a brief telephone call and leaflet of weight loss maintenance strategies (usual care); or usual care plus text intervention that encouraged regular self-weighing.
- The results showed no significant difference in weight change between the intervention and usual care groups nine months after completing the weight-loss programme, although the intervention group showed greater change (albeit not statistically significant).
- Participants in both study groups maintained weight loss in the short term, but regained weight over the longer term.
- The authors concluded that given rising levels of obesity, it is increasingly important to deliver simple, low-cost weight maintenance services to prevent weight regain. As a result, further research should explore how tele-health can support behaviour change by providing personalised information about diet and/or physical activity, and setting weekly weight-related goals.

Reference

Sidhu MS, Daley A, Jolly K. Evaluation of a text supported weight maintenance programme 'Lighten Up Plus' following a weight reduction programme: randomised controlled trial. *Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act.* 2016. **13:**19 [<http://goo.gl/fN6uaV>]
See also *CLAHRC BBC BITE: Lighten Up Trial* [<http://goo.gl/xaOi0o>]



Recommendations for Practice

Future text-based maintenance services should be altered to increase effectiveness against weight regain, for example, a more intense and interactive programme of reminders. In addition, providing specific information (such as relating to minutes of exercise per day or regulating calorie intake) can better support maintenance compared with generic material.

What is NIHR CLAHRC West Midlands?

The Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care (CLAHRC) is a partnership between universities (Birmingham, Warwick, Keele and Aston) and a number of health and social care organisations in the West Midlands. We are funded by the National Institute for Health Research with a mission to undertake high-quality applied health research focused on the needs of patients to improve health services locally and beyond. For further information, visit:

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