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Do E-health interventions improve physical activity in young people: A systematic review

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Objectives: This study aims to review current literature to assess the effectiveness of E-health interventions in increasing physical activity in young people.

Study Design: This study is a systematic review of the literature.

Methods: A search of the literature databases Embase, Medline and the Cochrane Library, using key words: Adolescents, young people, students, young adults, teenagers, E-health, internet-based, web-based, exercise, activity, sport and intervention yielded 10 articles which fit the criteria for inclusion. PRISMA protocol was used and papers were excluded if they were disease focused, not specific to young people (those attending school, college or university) or did not measure physical activity as an outcome.

Results: Eight of the 10 studies had significant increases in physical activity as a result of an E-health intervention. Studies that did not use a theoretical principle to underpin their intervention did not achieve successful results. Interventions based on social cognitive theory were very successful in achieving an increase in physical activity. The theory of planned behavior had mixed results, with studies having contrasting results. SMART goal principle was not effective in increasing physical activity but had positive findings in supplementary outcomes such as goal setting.

Conclusions: E-health interventions are a very successful way to increase physical activity. More research is required to look at what theoretical principles are best to underpin interventions and also to assess the length of intervention required for optimal results post intervention. Ideas surrounding implementation and the mediums used require more study to evidence base these interventions for schools, colleges and university via intra or extra curriculum.

Biography

Jerome R D McIntosh is a Doctor with a passion for innovation and enterprise in healthcare. His continual conquest for healthcare improvement has driven him to complete a BSc alongside his Medical degree in Innovation and Enterprise in Clinical Medicine. He has used his time here to be involved in various healthcare improvement and evaluation projects, with a special interest in sport and its application in healthcare improvement. His commitment has been rewarded early in his professional journey having been awarded Early Career Innovator Prize at the International Festival of Public Health 2016. Alongside his academic proficiencies, he is a national level athlete competing in the 100 m and 200 m disciplines and has won various honors, the most notable; A Bronze medal at the British Universities and College Sports National Championships and the Gold medal at the North of England Senior Indoor Championships 2016.

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