Weight management in a digital world

Paul Sacher PhD, RD
Chief Research & Development Officer

e/mHealth section meeting
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Slimming World overview

- UK largest lifestyle weight management service
- Founded: 1969
- Multicomponent approach
- Service delivered via:
  - Face-to-face groups
  - Or website, apps (since 2004)
  - Or combination of above
Large scale delivery: UK & Ireland

- 18,000 weekly face-to-face groups
- 900,000 members
- Delivered by 4,600 highly trained members
Other interesting stats

- Slimming World UK magazine - 3rd most actively purchased magazine, selling 645k copies per issue
- Recipe books >1.5 million per year
- Website page sessions >100 million/year
- App users: 1.1 million
- Slimming World’s approach is very popular in the UK!
Slimming World USA launched online - January 2017
Slimming World's multicompontent service

- Healthy, balanced diet: No fads, gimmicks or supplements - regular foods. Science of energy density & satiety
- Tailored physical activity: for people currently inactive
- Underpinned by behavior change
- Approach: genuine warmth, compassion, empathy, respect, understanding
- Meets wide range of international weight management and population level nutrition guidelines
- Cost: $10-$15/month, initial 3 month subscription (30 day refund policy)
Digital components include:

- Eating plan: step by step guidance, recipes (900), videos
- Food search, food diary and planning tools
- 12 week structured behavior change program
- Social support – community, closed group including weekly live facilitated online group
- Activity tracker, physical activity program
- Weight and mood tracking, weekly weigh-ins plus tailored feedback
- Content - healthy lifestyle articles, case studies
- Weekly support emails and reminders
- Free digital magazine
- Delivered via responsive website (new app launch 2018)
Digital research strategy: aims

• Provide gold-standard digital service - while staying true to our face-to-face model
• Harness benefits of digital while trying to overcome any limitations
• Gain better understanding of what usage, features & type of engagement, has what effects using mixed methods
  - Use this data to optimize member engagement, retention, experience & ultimately weight loss & maintenance outcomes
Commitment to research & evaluation

- Contributing to the evidence base since 90’s
- Peer-reviewed publications and abstracts: >60
- Nutrition and research team: 10 academics and HCPs
- Specialist Advisor Panel: 10 experts in nutrition, PA, BC, digital health
- Board level commitment
- Demonstrated industry/academic partnerships
Case study: industry/academic collaboration: digital weight maintenance trial (NoHoW)

- 5 year, European Commission-funded, multi-country, RCT ($5.8 million)
- Aim: development of evidence-based digital technologies and tools for weight loss maintenance
Establish evidence foundation

- How do people maintain weight loss?
  - Why do they regain weight?
  - How can we help?

Build a Toolkit (TK)

- ICT-based tools to support behaviour change to maintain weight loss
- Enable self-monitoring (scales, activity trackers)

Share what we learn

- Communicate our findings widely to general public, researchers, policymakers
- If TK proves effective, develop commercial weight loss maintenance services

Test the TK

- Multi-centre trial in Denmark, Portugal and UK
- Test if TK helps people maintain weight loss
  - Determine what parts of TK were (or were not) useful

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 643309.
Academic/industry collaboration

• Major grant requirement was demonstration of ability to scale-up via commercialization

• Slimming World role- to integrate and scale effective WLM findings via its digital services

• Win win situation

• For more info: [http://nohow.eu/](http://nohow.eu/)
Conclusions

• Imperative that interventions being offered thoroughly evaluated and findings disseminated

• Academic and industry collaboration crucial - ensure that interventions are evidence-based, effective, engaging and scaled up

• Committed to ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement of our evidence-based services

• As always we are open to collaborating and sharing knowledge to advance the management of obesity
For more information

• [slimmingworld.com](http://slimmingworld.com)  
  – Sign up for free digital magazine

• [slimmingworld.com/science](http://slimmingworld.com/science)  
  – Research portfolio  
  – Health Care Professional booklet

• Email: paul.sacher@slimmingworld.com
Thanks for your time!

@drpaulsacher
@slimmingworldUS