EVIDENCE-BASED ICT TOOLS FOR WEIGHT LOSS MAINTENANCE

Health problems associated with obesity are a major healthcare challenge. Effective interventions and successful commercial weight loss programmes to help people lose weight already exist. However, most people re-gain the weight they lose – the real challenge is to maintain weight loss. There are many techniques available to help people change their behaviour in the long term but we still don’t know which of these techniques work best for weight loss maintenance (WLM) or why. To better tackle obesity and prevent weight regain, NoHoW will learn more about behaviour changes that help people to maintain their weight loss in the long run, develop a Toolkit for WLM, and test the Toolkit in a large trial in the UK, Denmark and Portugal.

WEIGHT LOSS MAINTENANCE

NoHoW has carried out a large, online survey in the UK, Denmark and Portugal to learn about patterns of weight loss, what people do to maintain their weight loss, and where people most often need support in preventing weight regain. We collected data from people who had previously lost weight, including information about weight loss goals, motivation for weight loss, socioeconomic factors, and demographics. The findings of the survey have informed development of the NoHoW Toolkit and design of the NoHoW trial.

CHANGING BEHAVIOUR

NoHoW researchers in the UK, Denmark and Portugal interviewed people who had successfully lost weight and were working to maintain their weight loss. The interviews examined in-depth how these people manage their daily activity and food intake, emotions/emotional eating and stress. The results of these interviews have been used to identify when and what type of WLM support is needed. Supports have been included in the NoHoW Toolkit to help people make lasting changes to behaviours that impact on their long-term WLM.

NoHoW TOOLKIT

Information technology offers attractive tools for delivering interventions that would otherwise be delivered through resource-intensive face-to-face therapies. NoHoW researchers have developed the NoHoW Toolkit based on what we have learned about WLM during the project, as well as what we already know about using technology to successfully change behaviours. The Toolkit gives users access to web-based tools and lets users track their own data from smart scales and activity trackers. We interviewed target users to see what they thought about early versions of the Toolkit and how they thought it could be improved.

EVIDENCE IT WORKS

The NoHoW Toolkit is now being tested in a randomised controlled trial in the UK, Denmark and Portugal. We have recruited over 1,600 overweight/obese men and women who have successfully lost more 5% of their body weight in the last year. Participants have been assigned to one of four different groups and given different levels of support through the Toolkit, including motivation and goal setting, emotion regulation, and stress management. All participants have been asked to weigh themselves regularly and wear their activity trackers all the time. The trial will tell us if and how the Toolkit works by comparing results from the different groups.

The NoHoW Team

Find us online at www.nohow.eu and follow NoHoWH2020 on Twitter

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