

Obesity Prevention and Control: Technology-Supported Multicomponent Coaching or Counseling Interventions to Reduce Weight

Task Force Finding and Rationale Statement

Intervention Definition

Technology-supported multicomponent coaching or counseling interventions use technology to facilitate or mediate interactions between a coach or counselor and an individual or group, with a goal of influencing weight-related behaviors or weight-related outcomes. These interventions often also include other components, which may be technological or non-technological.

Technology-supported components may include the use of computers (e.g., internet, CD-ROM, e-mail, kiosk, computer program), video conferencing, personal digital assistants, pagers, pedometers with computer interaction, or computerized telephone system interventions targeting physical activity, nutrition, or weight. Non-technological components may include in-person counseling, manual tracking, printed lessons, and written feedback. Because of differences in implementation and in the intended outcomes, interventions aimed at reducing weight were considered separately from those intended to maintain weight loss.

Task Force Finding (June 2009)

The Community Preventive Services Task Force recommends technology-supported multicomponent coaching or counseling interventions intended to reduce weight on the basis of sufficient evidence that they are effective in improving weight-related behaviors or weight-related outcomes.

Rationale

A systematic review of the literature in the period 1966-June 2008 identified 14 studies that examined technology-supported multicomponent coaching or counseling interventions relevant to weight loss. All of the studies reported reductions in weight, with a median decrease of 3.7 kgs (8.1 lbs.) with a median follow-up time of 6 months. Seven studies reported physical activity and/or nutrition outcomes. The results for physical activity outcomes were mixed. Effects on nutrition outcomes were generally small but showed a reduction in caloric intake. On the basis of this evidence, the Task Force concludes that technology-supported multicomponent coaching or counseling interventions to reduce weight are effective for improving weight-related behaviors and/or weight-related outcomes. Although the body of evidence consisted of a number of methodologically sound studies, the included comparison groups were exposed to a variety of different treatment conditions. Because the heterogeneity among the treated comparison groups added uncertainty to the effect estimates, the Task Force considered these studies to provide sufficient rather than strong evidence of intervention effectiveness. The review found no evidence of harms from these interventions.

The data presented here are preliminary and are subject to change as the systematic review goes through the scientific peer review process.

Disclaimer

The findings and conclusions on this page are those of the Community Preventive Services Task Force and do not necessarily represent those of CDC. Task Force evidence-based recommendations are not mandates for compliance or spending. Instead, they

provide information and options for decision makers and stakeholders to consider when determining which programs, services, and policies best meet the needs, preferences, available resources, and constraints of their constituents.

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