Impact of social media interventions on eating behaviours in young people: a mixed-method systematic review

Aim

- Systematic review of quantitative and qualitative studies (interventions & observational)
- Search date: 2/3/2023
- Databases: ASSIA, Cochrane Library, Embase, MEDLINE, PsychINFO, Scopus, Web of Science
- Analysis: Convergent segregated approach.
- Eligibility: Year 2000 onwards
- Registration: PROSPERO CRD42023414476

Results

Quantitative Findings

- 19 interventions (n=16 studies)
- Study Design: Quasi-experimental (n=11), RCT (n=6), Observational (n=2)
- Location: US (n=8), UK (n=4)
- Target Pop: Undergraduates (18-22 y; n=2390 total)
- Intervention Duration: Ave 12.8 weeks, most <10 weeks (n=11); longest at 12 months
- Intervention Target: Healthy eating (n=12), Weight gain prevention (n=5)
- Social Media Platforms: Facebook (n=14), Instagram (n=6), Twitter (n=5)
- Effectiveness: Positive impact (n=12), No impact (n=7)
- Frameworks: Social Cognitive Theory (n=2), Social Ecological Model (n=2), ‘Not reported’ (n=8)
- Behaviour Change Techniques: ‘Information about health consequences’ (n=13), ‘Feedback on behaviours’ (n=9), ‘Goal setting’ (n=8)

Conclusions

- Social media is a promising tool to shape young people’s eating behaviours → Tailored, local content is key.
- Previous interventions show significant positive change to diet → potential ↑ effectiveness using behaviour change techniques
- Aligning content & delivery mode with audience preferences is vital
- Emphasising well-being & mental health resonates deeply with the target audience.