Impact of Mobile Apps to Combat Obesity in Children and Adolescents: A Systematic Literature Review.

Almost 33% of American children and teenagers are currently living with overweight or obesity. While increased sedentary behaviour caused by increased screen time among children has often been cited as a cause of obesity, experts are examining the use of mobile apps to encourage physical activity, social support, and education about healthy behaviours. The aim of this review is to evaluate “the impact of mobile app technology on obesity-related anthropometric, psychosocial, and behavioural outcomes in children and adolescents.”

Researchers examined 9 articles as part of this meta-analysis, 6 of which exclusively used the mobile app and 3 that focused on multi-component interventions. The applications created focused on a combination of psychosocial, behavioural, and physical outcomes. The study designs, number of participants and reported measurements were highly varied between studies. Although the field is promising, results were inconclusive regarding whether mobile apps are an effective intervention or component of an intervention.