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Ehn, Monica, "Injunctive and Descriptive Norm Effects on Physical Activity" (2015). Annual Graduate Student Symposium. 18. http://scholarworks.uni.edu/agss/2015/all/18

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Injunctive and Descriptive Norm Effects on Physical Activity
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Abstract

This study investigated the effect of injunctive and descriptive norms on physical activity. These norms were developed using a pre-experimental study with a moderate-sized sample (n = 258) of participants. The results showed that injunctive norms had a significant effect on physical activity, while descriptive norms had a modest effect. The study also found that injunctive norms were more effective in the short term than in the long term.

Method

Participants were recruited from a pool of volunteers and were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: descriptive, injunctive, or descriptive plus injunctive. The intervention lasted for four weeks, with normative feedback delivered 15 and 22 days after beginning participation.

Results

Participants in the injunctive norm condition showed a significant increase in physical activity, while participants in the descriptive norm condition showed a modest increase. The descriptive plus injunctive condition showed the greatest increase in physical activity.

Conclusion

Injunctive norms had a significant effect on physical activity, while descriptive norms had a modest effect. The study also found that injunctive norms were more effective in the short term than in the long term.

References


Future Directions

Future research may seek to further investigate the use of technology in exercise interventions.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Participants would increase number of steps from week 1 to week 2 of the study as a result of self-monitoring via the Fitbit Zip pedometer.

Hypothesis 2: Regardless of condition (descriptive or injunctive feedback), participants would show no change in number of steps from week 1 to week 2.

Hypothesis 3: Participants would show an increase in number of steps from week 1 to week 2 in the descriptive norm condition.

Hypothesis 4: Participants in the descriptive plus injunctive norm condition would show the greatest increase in number of steps from week 1 to week 2, compared to the descriptive norm condition.