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Psychological interventions aimed to increase motivation and promote adherence to healthy patterns in exercise Apps: an evaluation questionnaire proposal

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Introduction:

Limitations and barriers have been identified when planning physical activity (PA) programs, where psychological factors play a very important role. In addition, several studies have also identified behavioural counselling interventions, which can be applied to PA programs. Many applications (apps) in the market offer training plans which could potentially help to lead more active lifestyles; however, attrition rates to training apps tend to be high and behavioural change remains still a challenge. Little is known about the different variables and specific barriers to adherence to exercise or PA within the new technologies. Thus, the goal of the present research work is to design and validate a questionnaire in order to determine the motivational profile of app users.

Methods:

In order to determine the motivational profile of Mammoth Hunters App users, an App that personalizes exercise plans, a questionnaire was created, applied, and validated. When users submitted their permission to use the app, they were invited to answer the questionnaire. Anonymous information about demographics, app usage, prevalence of chronic disease, emotional and motivational status was collected. The final proposed questionnaire consisted of 9 questions with 5 answer options based on a Likert scale.

Results:

A total of 231 active users answered the motivational questionnaire and 222 were considered as correctly answered. Participants descriptive data showed: age range 18-69 years, weight range 50-80 kg, mean BMI=24. Correlations between their motivation (intrinsic vs extrinsic) and their levels of engagement to their exercise plan, were obtained. The questionnaire (created specifically for this study) showed consistency (Cronbachs alpha-coefficients >0.70). Exploratory factor analysis of the questionnaire with 9 items resulted in two factors (intrinsic and extrinsic motivation) explained 63,14% of variance. Exploratory factor analysis presented satisfactory goodness fit indices.

Conclusions:

A motivational questionnaire was created, applied, and validated with Mammoth Hunters app users. Therefore, the results that have been sorted out by questioning can be considered reliable for the determination of the individuals motivation. These results will enable us to identify user patterns, predict adherence rates and dropout risk, and develop a series of motivational interventions to promote user adherence to exercise to reduce app attrition.

Topic: Physical Activity Promotion

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