

Effectiveness of integrated technology apps for supporting healthy food purchasing and consumption: a systematic review

ABSTRACT

A healthy diet is essential for good health and nutrition, though literature showed that there are various factors affecting the intention to purchase and consume healthy food. Technology integration is known to be useful in various aspects, but findings from studies on the efficacy of technology integration to improve healthy food consumption and purchase have largely been inconsistent. Therefore, we aimed to examine the efficacy of interventions that use technology apps to improve healthy food purchasing and consumption in adults. Relevant studies were identified through PubMed, Scopus, CINAHL, SportDiscuss and ACM Digital Library. Twenty studies were included in the systematic review. The majority of studies (n = 18) used a smartphone in the intervention, and only two studies used a personal digital assistant. The results showed that technology integration-based intervention favoured healthy changes in household food purchases, and increased consumption of healthy food and healthy eating outcomes – albeit to different extents. Overall, technology apps are convenient and user-friendly tools to encourage a change in healthy food purchase and consumption among people.

Keyword: Healthy food intake; Food purchase; Smartphone applications; Efficacy; Healthy eating; Literature searches