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NoHoW: Evidence-based ICT tools for weight loss maintenance

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Introduction: Obesity is a key economic and healthcare challenge for Europe. Effective interventions for weight loss are widely available, but few comprehensive solutions exist to help with weight loss maintenance (WLM) and most people re-gain lost weight. Research suggests promising evidence-based behaviour change techniques for WLM are self-monitoring, goal setting, action control, building self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation and that stress management and emotion regulation skills are key enablers of relapse prevention. Information and communication technology (ICT) has potential to provide accessible, scalable channels for people to engage with these evidence-based behaviour change techniques.

Methods: The NoHoW project (No. 633309) is a 3-centre randomized controlled trial designed to evaluate the most effective ICT tools for WLM using up-to-date behavioural science research. ICT delivery will be facilitated via a suite of tools including networked-wireless tracking technologies, weighing scales and activity sensors, apps, multi media resources and internet-based support. Participants will be given feedback based on personalised prediction models of what is most effective for them.

Expected results and impact: The RCT and linked studies of European consumer needs and behaviour will test whether ICT-based delivery of evidence-based behaviour change techniques is effective for WLM. Project results will feed into new developments for implementation by Slimming World (a large European commercial weight-loss provider), providing WLM benefits to >700,000 overweight and obese individuals. Large-scale implementation of online WLM tools will provide complementary, enhanced support to services that promote health education and weight management.