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Poster: Effects of a theory-based physical activity intervention in the workplace using latent growth modelling

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Background: Promoting health and physical activity in the workplace is advocated by public health institutions across the globe. Using e-mails and text messages shows great potential to reach a captive audience at minimal costs, but little is known about their respective effects and on the efficacy of one medium versus the other. This study aimed to evaluate the effects of MoveM8, an e-mail and text message communication intervention, guided by the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), on leisure-time (LTPA), workplace physical activity (WPA), total physical activity, and TPB constructs.

Methods: A 12-week randomised intervention with two study groups (e-mail only or e-mail plus SMS text messaging) was implemented between September 2009 and August 2010 with a sample of 361 employees at 17 workplaces across the United Kingdom. Participants completed three assessments; baseline, immediately after, and 4 weeks after the intervention. Intervention effects on physical activity behaviour and TPB variables were evaluated using latent growth modelling.

Results: Participants in the e-mail only group showed a significant increase in attitude towards physical activity, and larger albeit non-significant increase in WPA and LTPA, compared with those in the e-mail plus SMS group, who showed a decrease in WPA, a smaller increase in LTPA, and a significant decrease in both intention to be physically active and total physical activity.

Conclusions: Results support the efficacy of the MoveM8 e-mail only intervention in attaining significant short-term improvements in attitudes towards physical activity, and in maintaining WPA and LTPA over 16 weeks.