The effect of mobile phone text messaging on women's Body Mass Index and food habits

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Abstract:

Introduction:

Nowadays, of the greatest health challenges across the world are obesity and overweighting, although there are clinical and commercial weight loss programs in Iran, it is not easy for many individuals to use these programs because of various limitations including time, costs, transportation and other similar factors. Therefore, examining different approaches are needed to find an effective, acceptable, economically reasonable and continuous program for modifying behavior and lifestyle factors which are associated with obesity. The aim of this study was to determine the effect of short message service on Body Mass Index and food habits in overweight and obese employed women.

Methods:
There were overweight and obese employed women in this quasi-experimental study with two control and experimental groups. Subjects were selected from administrative departments of Tehran University of Medical Sciences (subjects in experimental group and subjects in control group). All subjects attended a face-to-face information session and received a booklet contains strategies and recommendations for weight control. Therefore control group received the same baseline information and booklet as the experimental group. The experimental group received text message about weight control twice a day for two months, in addition to information and booklet which they received in the information session. The study consisted of two months intervention and one month wash out period. Baseline and secondary BMI and food habits were measured in two groups using Stadiometer, calibrated scale and food habits questionnaire respectively and were compared by parametric and non parametric tests.

Results:
The experimental group lost more weight than the control group (p=). The mean reduction in BMI was significantly greater in intervention group (P=). Although the experimental group raised dietary fruits and vegetables intake and decreased fats, high calories drinks, fast foods and miscellaneous, but there was no significant differences in other aspects of food habits between experimental and control groups after three months.

Discussion: Text messaging seems to be an effective and productive channel of communication in weight loss programs in overweight women. More researches is needed to examining the effect of text messaging on food habits.

Key words: Text Messaging, obesity, Body Mass Index, Food habits