New technologies and sexual health promotion
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Overview

• Sexual health promotion via
  – Mobile phone SMS
  – Smartphone apps
  – Facebook

• Key issues
  – Acceptability
  – Equity
  – Translation
  – Evaluation

New media

New technologies have revolutionised communication
  – 108 mobiles for every 100 Australians
  – 89% of Australian adults own a smartphone
  – Australian’s downloaded 67 million apps in 2012
  – Australia has >13 million Facebook users; half aged 18-34 years

Opportunities for health promotion

SMS trial – sexual health (2006)

Lim et al, JECH, 2012
Gold et al, STD, 2011

SMS trial – alcohol (2015)

• Hourly messages while drinking
• Brief data collection via web survey
• Tailored feedback SMS
  "You’ve already had 8 drinks tonight but you said you only wanted 6. Grab a water next round or you’ll blow your holiday savings!"
• High acceptability

Smartphone apps

Muessig, JMIR 2013
Smartphone apps

- Sexual health info in:
  - 3/74 sex-related entertainment apps
  - 1/44 dating apps targeted to heterosexuals
  - 7/9 dating apps targeted to gay men
  - 0/3 dating apps targeted to lesbian women

Facebook

- Sexual health content directly in your newsfeed

Acceptability

- Are sexual health and Facebook compatible?
  - Disruptive of social practices
  - Facebook is immediate, preventive health is not
  - Facebook is fun, sexual health is serious
  - Sexual health should be anonymous
  - Information shared on Facebook is carefully selected to present a certain identity
  (Byron 2013 Rep Health Matters)

Young people’s preferred source of sexual health information

Translation / Scale up:
The SHY SMS project

- SHY used ‘best practice’ in health promotion
  - Based on good evidence of impact of SMS
- Aimed to reach 5,100 young people
  - Actually reached 119 people (2%)
  - Insufficient resources for recruitment
- An intervention that is cheap, easy, and convenient to deliver is not always cheap, easy, and convenient to implement

Wright, Aus J Health Promo, 2015
**Evaluation**

- Reach
  - e.g. user numbers, likes
- Effectiveness
  - e.g. behaviour change in controlled trials
- Difficult to measure both in same study

**Some considerations**

- Newer isn’t always better
- The medium is the medium. The message is the message.
- Just because you can do it, doesn’t mean you should
- If your amazing Facebook profile falls in the forest, does it make a sound?
- Likes ≠ Impact
- These media are great for health promotion, just don’t get over excited!

Lim et al, JMIR mHealth 2014

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