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# Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

The article “Web-Based Weight Management Programs for Children and Adolescents: A Systematic Review of Randomized Controlled Trial Studies” by An, Hayman, Park, Dusaj, and Ayres (July-September 2009, Vol 32, No 3, pp 222-240) was engaging me as a graduate occupational therapy student interested in weight management. With more than 17% of children and adolescents classified as overweight, the healthcare community must find evidence-based practices to help this population manage their weight and thus lower healthcare costs.

The systematic review that the authors conducted analyzed more than 246 possible articles to determine whether there was evidence supporting the use of the Internet in helping this population manage their weight. Of the 246 articles, 8 met the researchers’ criteria for inclusion. These studies used interventions such as the Internet, e-mail, interactive Web-based programs, or a combination of personal communication along with technology-based interventions to help adolescents regulate their weight. The authors also indicate that Web-based

weight management programs may also be beneficial to adolescents in that they may help “remove social barriers and provide anonymity” (An, Hayman, Park, Dusaj, & Ayres, 2009, p 237).

As more and more consumers become technologically savvy, we in the healthcare profession need to identify more efficient methods to help our clients. One such method could be the inclusion of an Internet-based program to help with the carry-over of education implemented in therapy. The research is indicating that a combination of in-person interventions supplemented by Internet-based programs may be beneficial to helping children and adolescents lose weight. Internet-based programs offer continuation of education at home and can offer a quick way to access answers to common questions. Further research needs to be conducted in order to determine the long-term effects as well as the cost-effectiveness of such programs.

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