

## Background

The prevalence and severity of childhood obesity continues to worsen, with more adolescents at risk of becoming severely obese adults and of developing a myriad of obesity-related illnesses. Finding effective methods to treat this epidemic is vital to the health of millions of American children.

Multidisciplinary behavioral programs offer promise as a means of promoting lifestyle changes leading to weight loss. While these programs have been shown to be modestly successful, they face problems of poor adherence and high attrition rates. It is probable that interim contact with patients, providing frequent tailored feedback on behaviors and reinforcing the messages provided during the in-person clinic sessions, would impact adherence and attrition by stimulating patient engagement. The extensive use of mobile phones by adolescents makes it likely that incorporating them into weight management programs for adolescents may offer an acceptable way of providing this interim contact.

## Objective

The objective of this project is to develop tailored text messages (TTM) to be delivered via mobile telephones to obese adolescents enrolled in the Michigan Pediatric Outpatient Weight Evaluation and Reduction (MPOWER) program. The use of tailored text messages as an adjunct to clinic visits in this multidisciplinary weight management program, presents a promising means of achieving interim contact, potentially increasing adherence and decreasing attrition among adolescents in the program. Therefore, the specific aims for this project are:

- To develop tailored text messages on five evidence-based weight-related topics, to be sent to the cellular phones of obese adolescents as an adjunct to an intensive multidisciplinary behavioral weight management program.
- To develop a computer application to send tailored text messages on a regular schedule to cellular phones and to receive text responses from participants.
- To pilot and feasibility test the text messaging intervention developed in Aims # 1 and 2 in obese adolescents enrolled in the University of Michigan Pediatric Comprehensive Weight Management Program.

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