The Effect of Changing Attitudes, Norms, or Self-Efficacy on Health Intentions and Behavior: A Meta-Analysis

Alexander Maki1, Erika Montanaro2, Ann E. Caldwell Hooper3, Angela D. Bryan2, Alexander J. Rothman1, & Paschal Sheeran4

1The University of Minnesota, 2The University of Colorado Boulder, 3The University of New Mexico, & 4The University of Sheffield

Introduction

• Previous meta-analytic work has demonstrated that interventions that elicit changes in intentions to engage in a health behavior lead to meaningful changes in health behavior (Webb & Sheeran, 2006).

• Theories such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985) posit that changing attitudes, norms, or self-efficacy should elicit meaningful changes in both intentions and behavior.

• The current meta-analysis set out to consider the extent to which interventions that elicit significant changes in attitudes, norms, or self-efficacy lead to meaningful changes in health-related intentions and behavior.

Inclusion Criteria and Literature Search

• There were four inclusion criteria for this meta-analysis. Studies had to:

  1. Focus on typical health behaviors (e.g., diet, exercise, cancer screening, etc.).
  2. Involve experimental manipulation of attitudes, norms, or self-efficacy, thus including an accompanying comparison condition.
  3. Generate a significant effect on attitudes, norms, or self-efficacy.
  4. Include a measure of intentions or behavior.

• The following databases were searched in May, 2010: Web of Knowledge, PsychINFO, PubMed, ProQuest, and Dissertation Abstracts International.

Method

• Figure 1 below shows the flow of information during the review process.

  Records identified through database searching (n = 15,077)
  Additional records identified through other sources (n = 142)
  Records after duplicates removed (n = 12,791)
  Records screened (n = 12,791)
  Full-text articles assessed for eligibility (n = 503)
  Studies included in qualitative synthesis (meta-analysis) (n = 129)

• The final meta-analysis included 129 studies that met the inclusion criteria.

• There was a high level of agreement between coders (kappa coefficients $M = 0.92$ and intraclass correlations $M = 0.94$) and disagreements were resolved through discussion.

• Figure 1 below shows the flow of information during the review process.

Results and Conclusion

• Interventions that elicited changes in attitudes or self-efficacy also elicited small-to-medium changes in intentions. Interventions that elicited changes in norms were able to elicit small changes in intentions.

• Interventions that elicited changes in self-efficacy also elicited small-to-medium changes in behavior. Interventions that elicited changes in attitudes were able to elicit small changes in behavior. Interventions that elicited changes in norms only had a negligible effect on behavior.

• Significant $Q$ statistics suggest that there is heterogeneity of effect sizes, and future analyses will consider moderation of effects. Additionally, it will be explored whether or not interventions that elicit changes in two or more of the constructs of attitudes, norms, and self-efficacy also elicit larger changes in intentions and behavior.

• This meta-analysis builds on prior meta-analytic work and demonstrates that interventions that elicit changes in attitudes, norms, or self-efficacy have differential effects on changing health-related intentions and behavior.

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Intention</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$N$</td>
<td>$k$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>13.012</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norm</td>
<td>4.847</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>10.146</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Impact of changing attitudes, norms, or self-efficacy on health-related intentions and behavior.

References


Acknowledgements: Support for this research was provided in part by the National Cancer Institute’s Behavioral Research Program. This work also benefited from guidance from members of the Cognitive, Affective, and Social Processes in Health Research Working Group (see http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/brp/casphr/index.html)

For further information regarding this study please contact: Alexander Maki, University of Minnesota maki0163@umn.edu