Smartphones may aid in dietary self-monitoring
Apps could help users reliably track dietary data, reports new study in the
Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior

PHILADELPHIA, PA, September 10, 2014 – Smartphones have seen wide adoption among Americans in recent years because of their ease of use and adaptability. With that in mind, researchers from Arizona State University examined how smartphone use affected weight loss goals and determined that smartphones may offer users an advantage over traditional methods when tracking diet data.

Roughly 83% of Americans now own a mobile phone and 45% own smartphones with Internet access. For this study, researchers recruited healthy, weight-stable adults and semirandomly divided them into groups based on their diet-tracking method. The groups consisted of those who used the “Lose It!” app, those who recorded dietary intake using the memo function of their smartphone, and those who used traditional paper and pencil to record their diet. Although smartphone use did not affect total weight loss among the 47 participants who completed the study, the researchers observed better diet tracking results among those in the smartphone-use groups.

“Participants using a commercially available app more consistently entered complete days of dietary data compared with the paper-and-pencil group and also withdrew from the study less often than the other groups,” lead author Christopher Wharton, PhD, said. “It’s possible that app technology offers a less burdensome method for tracking data compared with traditional tools.”

The memo and paper-and-pencil groups reported twice the number of missing days as the group using the app, but diet quality was not improved among app users. Therefore, it was concluded that food and nutrition professionals should consider using app technology in conjunction with dietary counseling for weight management. Because little data about smartphone use as it relates to weight management and dieting is available, this study should help inform further research in this area.
NOTES FOR EDITORS


Full text of the article is available to credentialed journalists upon request; contact Eileen Leahy at 732-238-3628 or jnebmedia@elsevier.com to obtain copies. To schedule an interview with the authors, please contact Iti Agnihotri, Media Relations Officer, Media Relations and Strategic Communications, Arizona State University, at 480-727-4058, 479-236-9969 (cell) or iti.agnihotri@asu.edu.

An audio podcast featuring an interview with Dr. Christopher M. Wharton is located at www.jneb.org/content/podcast. Excerpts from the podcast may be reproduced by the media; contact Eileen Leahy to obtain permission.

ABOUT THE JOURNAL OF NUTRITION EDUCATION AND BEHAVIOR (www.jneb.org)
The Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior (JNEB), the official journal of the Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior (SNEB), is a refereed, scientific periodical that serves as a resource for all professionals with an interest in nutrition education and dietary/physical activity behaviors. The purpose of JNEB is to document and disseminate original research, emerging issues, and practices relevant to nutrition education and behavior worldwide and to promote healthy, sustainable food choices. It supports the society’s efforts to disseminate innovative nutrition education strategies, and communicate information on food, nutrition, and health issues to students, professionals, policy makers, targeted audiences, and the public.

The Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior features articles that provide new insights and useful findings related to nutrition education research, practice, and policy. The content areas of JNEB reflect the diverse interests of health, nutrition, education, Cooperative Extension, and other professionals working in areas related to nutrition education and behavior. As the Society’s official journal, JNEB also includes occasional policy statements, issue perspectives, and member communications.

ABOUT ELSEVIER
Elsevier is a world-leading provider of information solutions that enhance the performance of science, health, and technology professionals, empowering them to make better decisions, deliver better care, and sometimes make groundbreaking discoveries that advance the boundaries of knowledge and human progress. Elsevier provides web-based, digital solutions — among them ScienceDirect (www.sciencedirect.com), Scopus (www.scopus.com), Elsevier Research Intelligence (www.elsevier.com/research-intelligence) and ClinicalKey (www.clinicalkey.com) — and publishes nearly 2,200 journals, including The Lancet (www.thelancet.com) and Cell (www.cell.com), and over 25,000 book titles, including a number of iconic reference works.

The company is part of Reed Elsevier Group PLC (www.reedelsevier.com), a world-leading provider of professional information solutions in the Science, Medical, Legal and Risk and Business sectors, which is jointly owned by Reed Elsevier PLC and Reed Elsevier NV. The ticker symbols are REN (Euronext Amsterdam), REL (London Stock Exchange), RUK and ENL (New York Stock Exchange).