Adolescence is considered a period of intense biopsychosocial changes, and it requires specific nutritional needs. Healthy eating habits are essential to the appropriate growth and development of this age group, however, literature has shown a tendency of inadequate eating habits among youth. The Transtheoretical Model (TTM) describes changes, not as something punctual, instead, as a series of steps that take place according to someone's degree of motivation. Individuals are classified among five stages of change, which are determined by their motivation. The way to promote improvement through the stages is represented by the processes of change. As the individuals progress throughout the stages it is expected an increase in their self-efficacy, as well as the recognition of more benefits than barriers to the behavior change. Therefore this work aimed to describe how the TTM was applied to nutritional interventions for adolescents.

METHODOLOGY

- The development of this work followed The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) directions, therefore it is registered on PROSPERO Website (#CRD42018096819).
- Databases searched were Adolec, Google Scholar, LILACS, PsycINFO, PubMed, Science Direct, and Web of Science. Only randomized controlled trials and quasi-experimental designs written in English, Spanish and Portuguese that applied the TTM to nutritional interventions targeting adolescents were included, without restrictions to time of publication.
- Titles and abstracts searched were submitted to the software Mendeley. Data extraction occurred through the usage of a table based on instructions of Centre for Reviews and Dissemination for Undertaking Reviews in Healthcare. Quality and risk of bias were assessed through a questionnaire, developed by Effective Public Health Practice Project.

RESULTS

Quality Assessment: Three articles were classified as weak, four as moderate ones and three studies were considered strong.

Population: Age ranged from seven to nineteen.

Study design: Sample size varied between 50 to 4158 participants. A total of seven randomized controlled trial and four quasi-experimental studies were included. Most studies had one follow-up measurements, with exception of three. Study duration (including pretest and posttest measurements) ranged from one month to three years, with plenty of them having six months of duration or more.

 Exposure to the intervention: In one study participants were exposed to the intervention only once, while three interventions had weekly sessions, and another send printed magazines once a month. One study enabled access to a website during a period of nine months, with support from teachers.

CONCLUSIONS

There are some limitations related to the studies included in this review, such as the differences of their designs, the time of exposure to the intervention and still, the usage of the model associated with other behavior change theories. Nevertheless, the TTM seems to be a successful strategy in nutritional interventions in adolescents. Studies that compare the usage of the TTM with other behavior change theories are suggested, so that it is possible to reach a better understanding of its effectiveness.