



Promoting Sexual Health With SMS Texting Technology

LYNN BLACKBURN, DNP, WHNP-BC
ANITA BLATNIK, MSN, WHNP-BC



Eighty-three percent of all adults in the United States own a cellular (cell) phone (Smith, 2011). Cell phones are used for making phone calls, of course, but emerging technologies allow them to be used for a wide variety of uses, from setting an alarm to watching videos. Outside of making voice calls, the most frequently used feature is the short messaging service (SMS), also known as the text message or “texting.” Young adults were the first to embrace this technology and remain the primary users (Raacke &

Bonds-Raacke, 2011). While nearly three-fourths of cell phone users report using text messaging, this percentage increases to 95 percent for cell phone users between the ages 18 and 29 (Smith, 2011). Texting has become the preferred method of communication among college-age people in the United States (Skierkowski & Wood, 2012; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion [HHS, ODPHP], 2010).

These young adults who are the most comfortable with texting are the same demographic

Abstract Most cell phone owners use the short message service (SMS), also known as “texting.” Most teens and young adults use text messages; they were the first users to embrace this technology and are still the most frequent users. Text messaging has the potential to provide them with information about preventing sexually transmitted infections. Several innovative programs that use text messaging to promote sexual health are described here. DOI: 10.1111/1751-486X.12074

Keywords SMS | sexually transmitted infection | STI | text message | texting



who are at the greatest risk for contracting a sexually transmitted infection (STI), most commonly chlamydia. Chlamydia is the most frequently reported notifiable disease in the United States (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2011). The highest rates of chlamydia cases (4,917.3 per 100,000) are found among 19-year-old women (CDC, 2011).

Using SMS technology has the potential to be an important source for STI education and prevention. This article will explore and propose the idea of using electronic media to affect sexual behavior and health outcomes in the young adult population.

Texting in Health Care

Numerous research studies have found that text messaging is an effective strategy to decrease missed appointments at outpatient clinics or physician visits (Chen, Fang, Chen, & Dai, 2008; Da Costa, Salomão, Martha, Pisa, & Sigulem, 2010; Downer, Meara, Da Costa, & Sethuraman, 2006; Perron et al., 2010; Taylor, Bottrell, Lawler, & Benjamin, 2012). Patients who receive texted reminders consistently miss fewer ap-

Texting has become the preferred method of communication among college-age people in the United States

pointments than those who receive no reminders or reminders by mail; and while some studies find results from texting similar to phoned reminders, the cost is significantly lower (Car, Gurol-Urganci, De Jongh, Vodopivec-Jamsek, & Atun, 2012; Chen et al., 2008).

Text messaging has also been shown to be effective in helping people adhere to their clinical care management plan for chronic disease. People with diabetes who receive text messages are significantly more able to remain compliant with their prescribed regimen and to reduce their hemoglobin A1C levels (Franklin, Waller, Pagliari, & Greene, 2006; Kim, 2007; Rami, Popow, Horn, Waldhoer, & Schober, 2006). Kim (2007) found that sending text messages to clients with diabetes was associated not only with



significant improvements in hemoglobin A1C levels, but also with compliance with taking diabetic medication, performing foot care and exercising. Improvements in the conditions of people with asthma or hypertension have also been found with text messaging interventions (Fjeldsoe, Marshall, & Miller, 2009). SMS-delivered interventions have been shown to have a positive outcome in affecting preventive health behavior changes, such as smoking cessation (Brendryen & Kraft, 2008), obtaining immunizations (Stockwell et al., 2012) and promoting physical activity (Lau, Lau, Wong, & Ransdell, 2011).

Text Messaging for Sexual Health Promotion

Teens and young adults are rarely without their phones; several innovative programs aimed at STI education and responsible sexual behavior have taken advantage of this fact. Several Australian studies of a text messaging intervention, which sent biweekly catchy texts to increase STI knowledge and promote STI testing, were found to be highly effective, especially among young women (Gold, Aitken et al., 2011; Gold, Lim et al., 2011, 2012). An interesting finding in all three studies was that the text receivers shared

Lynn Blackburn, DNP, WHNP-BC, is an instructor at the University of Tennessee College of Nursing in Knoxville, TN. Anita Blatnik, MSN, WHNP-BC, is a nurse practitioner at the University of Tennessee Student Health Center in Knoxville, TN. The authors report no conflicts of interest or relevant financial relationships. Address correspondence to: lblackbu@utk.edu.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/2634757>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/2634757>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)