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Choosing Your Network: Social Preferences in an Online Health Community

Damon Centola , Arnout van de Rijt

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**Highlights**

- Controlled study of network formation in an online fitness program
- Individuals' social preferences reduce potential value of online contacts by limiting new sources of health information
- Consistent choice patterns across six independent replications
- Participants ignored fitness leaders and fitness characteristics
- Participants exhibited a strong preference for homophily on age, gender and BMI

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