

Efficacy of a Pilot Internet-Based Weight Management Program (H.E.A.L.T.H.) and Longitudinal Physical Fitness Data in Army Reserve Soldiers

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Abstract

Background:

The primary aims of this article are to describe the utilization of an Internet-based weight management Web site [Healthy Eating, Activity, and Lifestyle Training Headquarters (H.E.A.L.T.H.)] over a 12–27 month period and to describe concurrent weight and fitness changes in Army Reserve soldiers.

Methods:

The H.E.A.L.T.H. Web site was marketed to Army Reserve soldiers via a Web site promotion program for 27 months (phase I) and its continued usage was observed over a subsequent 12-month period (phase II). Web site usage was obtained from the H.E.A.L.T.H. Web site. Weight and fitness data were extracted from the Regional Level Application Software (RLAS).

Results:

A total of 1499 Army Reserve soldiers registered on the H.E.A.L.T.H. Web site. There were 118 soldiers who returned to the H.E.A.L.T.H. Web site more than once. Registration rate reduced significantly following the removal of the Web site promotion program. During phase I, 778 Army Reserve soldiers had longitudinal weight and fitness data in RLAS. Men exceeding the screening table weight gained less weight compared with men below it ($p < .007$). Percentage change in body weight was inversely associated with change in fitness scores.

Conclusions:

The Web site promotion program resulted in 52% of available Army Reserve soldiers registering onto the H.E.A.L.T.H. Web site, and 7.9% used the Web site more than once. The H.E.A.L.T.H. Web site may be a viable population-based weight and fitness management tool for soldier use.

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Abbreviations: (ANOVA) analysis of variance, (APFT) Army physical fitness test, (BMI) body mass index, (H.E.A.L.T.H.) Healthy Eating, Activity, and Lifestyle Training Headquarters, (RLAS) Regional Level Application Software, (RRC) Regional Readiness Command, (STW) screening table weight

Keywords: Army Reserve, Internet, military, obesity prevention, weight management

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