

Healthy feeding habits: a home-visit, controlled exploratory study of a novel, habit-based intervention with parents of pre-school aged children

Submission date	Recruitment status	<input type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered
31/10/2012	No longer recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
Registration date	Overall study status	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan
22/11/2012	Completed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results
Last Edited	Condition category	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data
28/10/2013	Nutritional, Metabolic, Endocrine	

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims:

Parents are often the target of family-based dietary programmes as they are the dietary gatekeepers for young children. However, very few programmes use theory to promote behaviour change. Forming healthy habits could be one approach to improving the feeding habits of parents with pre-school aged children. This is based on the idea that repeating a behaviour in a certain situation over and over, will help to form new habits. This study assessed how effective this programme is in promoting healthy habits for three parental feeding behaviours (serving fruit/vegetables, healthy snacks, and non-sweet drinks).

Who can participate?

Parents of pre-school children.

What does the study involve?

Parents being visited at home four times by a researcher to discuss creating healthy habits and setting a new healthy habit each time relating to how they feed their child.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

The benefits of taking part are potential dietary improvements for both parents and children. There are no known risks of participating in this study.

Where is the study run from?

University College London, UK

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

The study began in May 2010 and ended in January 2012.

Who is funding the study?

Cancer Research UK

Who is the main contact?

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Contact information

Type(s)

Scientific

Contact name

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Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number

0521/003

Study information

Scientific Title

Healthy feeding habits: a cluster-randomized controlled exploratory trial of a novel, habit-based intervention with parents of pre-school aged children.

Study objectives

Habit theory was used as a framework to help parents adopt three healthy feeding behaviors (offering fruit or vegetables, serving healthy snacks, serving water instead of sweetened beverages). The hypothesis for this pilot trial was that there would be significantly greater increases in the subjective automaticity of the three parental feeding behaviors in the intervention group (i.e. habit strength), and significant increases in the child's intake of fruit and vegetables, snacks and drinks in the intervention group compared to controls.

Please note that as of 11/02/2013, the following changes were made to the trial record:

1. The public title was previously "Healthy feeding habits: a home-visit, controlled pilot study of a novel, habit-based intervention with parents of pre-school aged children"
2. The scientific title was previously "Healthy feeding habits: a cluster-randomized controlled pilot trial of a novel, habit-based intervention with parents of pre-school aged children."

Ethics approval required

Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)

University College London Ethics Committee, 01 April 2010, ref: 0521/003

Study design

Cluster randomised controlled exploratory trial

Primary study design

Interventional

Study type(s)

Quality of life

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Public Health, Obesity Prevention

Interventions

The healthy feeding habits intervention was delivered over the course of four fortnightly visits to the family home. Each visit lasted approximately 1 hour and involved the researcher working through an intervention booklet with the parent. The child was not directly involved. The booklet introduced the concept of habits along with information on environmental support for habit-formation (e.g. sticking to a routine, consistency, persistence, and had detachable self-monitoring sheets to use during the habit acquisition phase. There were sections for each of the target feeding areas: serving fruit or vegetables, choice of snacks, and choice of drinks. Focusing on one topic at each visit, parents formulated a specific, new healthy feeding habit in relation to that aspect of their child's diet which was in line with an overall healthy goal, i.e. increase fruit and vegetable intake, serve healthy snacks and reduce sugary drinks. At each subsequent visit, parents were encouraged to continue the previous habit(s) while introducing a new one. On the final visit, they completed the post-intervention questionnaire and a brief interview on their experience of the intervention.

Intervention Type

Other

Phase

Not Applicable

Primary outcome(s)

Parent habit strength for each new feeding behavior (measured by self-reported automaticity).

Key secondary outcome(s)

Children's food intake and intervention acceptability

Completion date

01/01/2012

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

Parents with a child aged between 2-5 years and were motivated to take part.

Participant type(s)

Patient

Healthy volunteers allowed

No

Age group

Child

Lower age limit

2 years

Upper age limit

5 years

Sex

All

Key exclusion criteria

Parents with a child that had a serious medical condition which meant they had a severely restricted diet.

Date of first enrolment

01/05/2010

Date of final enrolment

01/01/2012

Locations

Countries of recruitment

United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre

Health Behaviour Research Centre

London

United Kingdom

WC1E 7HB

Sponsor information

Organisation
University College London (UK)

ROR
<https://ror.org/02jx3x895>

Funder(s)

Funder type
Research organisation

Funder Name
Cancer Research UK (UK) ref: C1418/A7974

Alternative Name(s)
CR_UK, Cancer Research UK - London, Cancer Research UK (CRUK), CRUK

Funding Body Type
Private sector organisation

Funding Body Subtype
Other non-profit organizations

Location
United Kingdom

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

IPD sharing plan summary

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Results article	results	01/09/2013		Yes	No
Participant information sheet	Participant information sheet	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes