Response to a single media announcement for an internet based hepa-intervention

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Introduction

It is estimated that at least one third of the Swiss population is not active enough to meet current recommendations for health enhancing physical activity. Therefore the promotion of physical activity is an element of growing importance in health promotion in Switzerland.

The project active-online.ch
active-online.ch is an interactive internet based intervention program for hepa-promotion with an expert system for individually tailored advice and counseling as the key element. It is based on the transtheoretical model of change.

Target group
Individuals of both genders between about 30 and 60 years of age who are not physically active on a regular basis.

Language
active-online.ch was developed in German and is currently translated into French and Italian. It is planned to also offer an English version.

Acceptance of the program
The evaluation of a prior version showed that its acceptance is good to very good and that inactive individuals can be reached.

Methods

A one page article about the program active-online.ch was placed in a Swiss biweekly magazine (circulation 330'000) on April 19th 2002. Readers were invited to test the program.

After a two week period user statistics and the data base of the expert system were used to estimate response to the single announcement and compliance to the program.

Results

Response to the announcement
947 visitors were registered on the website. This corresponds to a participation of 0.3% of all potential readers.

Compliance to the program
33% of all visitors to the website finished the hepa-module.

Mean duration of a visit
Mean duration of a session on the website was 12 minutes.

Proportion of registrations
Registration to the program active-online.ch is optional. 127 (13.4%) of the users chose to do so. 76% of them gave their Email-Address.

Discussion

• A considerable number of readers could be reached with a single article and a remarkable proportion of users registered and left an Email-address.
• Compliance to the program was very good.
• However, to disseminate such an intervention program on population level specific PR measure will be necessary.