

Habit and the intention-behaviour relationship within the theory of planned behaviour: Implications for information based interventions

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It is well documented that regular physical activity imparts significant physical and psychological health benefits; however 35% of children in the UK fail to meet current recommended activity targets (Health Survey for England, 2002). In order to develop interventions to increase participation, determinants of physical activity need to be identified. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) has been used extensively for this purpose. The TPB posits that the most proximal determinant of behaviour is the intention to perform that behaviour. In turn intention is predicted by three components; attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control. Empirical support for the predictive ability of the TPB in a physical activity domain is evident (e.g. Hagger, Chatzisarantis & Biddle, 2002), nonetheless current research suggests that intentional control of behaviour may be more limited than the TPB assumes. For example habit strength has been found to moderate the intention-behaviour relationship such that intentions predict behaviour among individuals with weak habits and not among individuals with strong habits (Chatzisarantis & Hagger, 2007). Implications for information based interventions are discussed.