

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

WALK 2.0 HEALTH

Professor Gregory Kolt, Head of the School of Biomedical and Health Sciences, is leading a team of researchers who will investigate the efficacy of a publicly available physical activity promotion website. The team includes Professor Anthony Maeder (UWS), Dr Corneel Vandelanotte, Dr Mitch Duncan and Dr Cristina Caperchione from CQ University, and Professor Kerry Mummery from University of Alberta. The project is funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council.

'More than half of the Australian population does not meet the recommended levels of physical activity to achieve health benefits,' reports Professor Kolt. 'Recent estimates place the cost of inactivity to the Australian healthcare system at around \$1.5b per year. An increased understanding of the costs and burden of inactivity has led to a growth and dissemination of internet based physical activity interventions which include innovative technology that has the potential to reach large groups of individuals and contribute to physical activity promotion. There is a need, however, for larger population studies in order to examine these new generation web-based applications and determine the effectiveness on participant attraction, engagement, retention and physical activity behaviour change.'

This research will develop and test the use of Web 2.0 applications to investigate the effects of "new generation" web-based applications such as blogs, wikis, podcasts and social networking applications including an existing publically available physical activity promotion website (the Australian 10,000 Steps website). This study will recruit and randomly assign volunteers to one of three arms of the trial. The trial will be tracked over 2 years to examine the changes in levels of physical activity and other health indicators, and utility of the applications in terms of engagement and retention.



It is expected that this study will provide increased understanding of the benefit of new web-based technologies and applications in engaging and retaining participants on web-based physical activity promotion sites. It will also provide the basis for the development and dissemination of future large-scale web-based social marketing/health promotion programs.

Project Title: WALK 2.0: Investigating the internal and external validity of Web 2.0 applications in promoting physical activity
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http://www.uws.edu.au/biomedical_health_sciences
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