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Title: An online education program for students sports studies on e-health to optimise lifestyle coaching

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Introduction: Lifestyle professionals use tailored counselling techniques to support people to reach a healthy lifestyle. This is often done during weekly face-to-face sessions. Between these sessions many people find it difficult to manage their own health, or to comply to recommended health advises. In that context, the use of eHealth may optimize the efficacy of health advises and increase compliance. Yet, until now, lifestyle professionals often lack knowledge and skills about how to use eHealth in client-settings. In order to prepare future lifestyle professionals in the use of eHealth in their work, we have developed an online educational module for students from Sport Studies, who learn how to design lifestyle interventions with eHealth.

Methods: Focus-group meetings were held to determine the needs and wishes about eHealth in practice of current and future lifestyle professionals. A total of six meetings were carried out with twenty-five students, six teachers and ten lifestyle professionals and other experts of the field. Collected stakeholder information was coded, mapped and translated into requirements for the module in the school-used digital learning environment: Moodle. The general aim of the online module is to learn students the theory of intervention development, and to assist them in developing an eHealth intervention for a specific population with health problems.

Results: Using the theoretical background and the collected requirements, the researchers and Moodle experts were able to develop a complete online module in which students learn how to use eHealth in practice and are supported by their assignments to develop an eHealth intervention. The conducted requirements describe the need for evidence-based information on usability and availability of eHealth apps, as well as eHealth infographics, videos and practical examples to learn from. The theory of intervention mapping was visualized in infographics for each step of the process. Different videos were recorded. Among others, one video introduced a lifestyle professional and his client, in which both parties reflect on the use of eHealth in a coach-client setting. Finally, as a practical example the Wheelchair Exercise and Lifestyle Study was used showing the process and lessons learned during the development of an eHealth intervention for wheelchair users.

Conclusion and future perspectives: In this project an online educational module was developed which matches the requirements based on experiences and wishes of students, teachers and lifestyle professionals. To support future and current lifestyle professionals in applying eHealth in their daily work activities, more supporting tools need to be developed. In a new research project, a method and multi-disciplinary education module will be developed and tested to help lifestyle professionals to integrate eHealth in the counselling of their clients.

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