Abstract

Background: Too few young people engage in behaviours that reduce the risk of morbidity and premature mortality. An online intervention, based on self-affirmation, the theory of planned behaviour and implementation intentions, targeted fruit and vegetable consumption, binge drinking, smoking and exercise during the transition to university. Methods/Design: New students (N=1448) were randomly allocated to an online health-behaviour intervention (U@Uni) or a measurement-only control condition two weeks before starting university. Participants were followed-up one month after starting university. Results: At follow-up, participants in the intervention group ate more fruit and vegetables, F(4, 883) = 24.52, p = .05, and were less likely to attend a freshers’ drinking event, B = .386, Wald(1) = 3.90, p = .048, than participants in control group. No significant effects were found on exercise and smoking. Discussion: The findings highlight the potential of online interventions targeting students during their transition to university.