IT improves pediatric obesity screening and treatment

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(HealthDay)—Health information technology (IT) can improve pediatric obesity screening rates and treatment, but the effect on weight loss and other outcomes is less clear, according to a study published online Feb. 4 in *Pediatrics*.

Anna Jo Smith, M.P.H., from Harvard Medical School in Boston, and colleagues identified and reviewed 13 published studies that examined the use of IT to deliver obesity screening or treatment to children (aged 2 to 18) and the effect on patient outcomes and care processes to manage obesity.

The researchers found that, of eight studies examining the use of electronic health records, five showed increased body mass index (BMI) screening rates. Two studies showed that telemedicine counseling was linked with alterations in BMI percentile similar to that found for in-person counseling, with improved treatment access. Of three studies examining the use of text messages or telephone support, one showed an association with maintenance of weight loss.

"To date, health IT interventions have improved access to obesity treatment and rates of screening," Smith and colleagues conclude. "However, the impact on weight loss and other health outcomes remains understudied and inconsistent. More interactive and time-intensive interventions may enhance health IT's clinical effectiveness in chronic disease management."

More information: Abstract
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