

Most smartphone healthy diet applications fall short of recommended guidelines

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Most smartphone applications claiming to improve consumers' diet, nutrition or eating habits are not compliant with evidence-based scientific guidelines, according to a preliminary study presented at the American Heart Association's Scientific Sessions 2016.

Researchers studied whether 32 health and fitness applications featured on Google Play and the iTunes application store adhered to the U.S. Government's 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. They found:

- About 72 percent of applications, included some of the five overarching healthy eating pattern components: healthy eating patterns; appropriate calorie limit; nutrient-dense foods and beverages; variety of foods and beverages; and community outreach and social support.
- 75 percent of the applications, however, received a low score for failing to address recommended daily amounts of food groups (such as vegetables, fruits, grains, dairy and protein).
- 84 percent fell short of addressing recommended daily amounts of food subgroups (including dark-green vegetables or whole grains) which comprise a healthy eating pattern.

"It is important that application developers address this information gap so as to safely and effectively achieve the applications' stated goals," researchers said.

Provided by American Heart Association

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