Automated nutrition app can help people follow healthier diet

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People could benefit from fully automated personal nutritional advice, as a new research paper shows that an app improved healthy diet in clinical trials.

A paper published in the *Journal of Medical Internet Research* shows how the eNutri app developed by researchers in [human nutrition](#) and [biomedical engineering](#) at the University of Reading helped people to eat more healthily. Participants who were given automated personalized nutrition advice improved their [healthy diet](#) score by 6% compared to a [control group](#) who were given general [healthy eating](#) guidance.

Dr. Roz Fallaize, Dietitian and Research Fellow at the University of Reading's Department of Food and Nutritional Science says that "the research demonstrates that the eNutri technology is effective in helping users to improve their healthy food intake, with a significant improvement in diet quality for the group who had access to automated, personalized nutrition advice."

"While having a registered nutritionist or dietitian giving personalized dietary advice is ideal, this is often only available to those with [health concerns](#) or with the financial resource to pay. There is also growing interest in nutrition apps and web services, but many commercial apps tend to focus on [weight loss](#) or calorie counting rather than healthy eating."

"Nutritional advice should always be focused on healthy, balanced diets and positive relationships with food, and I'm pleased that our study helped people eat better. One exciting aspect of the eNutri system is the potential to offer it to lots of people at low-cost."

Dr. Rodrigo Zenun Franco, a Ph.D. graduate from the University of Reading and lead author of the paper says that "the eNutri app prioritizes healthy eating based on evidence and uniquely uses a diet scoring system to provide food-based advice that is tailored to the individual user."

"We are continuing to develop eNutri to suit specific population groups including those with heart conditions and hope to make this available to

the public in the future."

People were either assigned to receive personalized nutrition advice or given general healthy eating advice. Those in the personalized group then had their diets scored according to 11 criteria based on UK dietary guidance. The eNutri app gave an automated assessment of diet quality giving the user a 'healthy diet score' out of 100.

The "healthy diet score" includes assessments of intake of fruit, vegetables, wholegrains, red and processed meat, with higher points awarded when users have the recommended intake of these. The personalized advice is then targeted to areas of their diet which they would benefit most from changing.

Provided by University of Reading