

Behaviour change techniques: the development and evaluation of a taxonomic method for reporting and describing behaviour change interventions (a suite of five studies involving consensus methods, randomised controlled trials and analysis of qualitative data)

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Plain English summary

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Plain English Summary

People's health can be improved by changing their behaviour, for example by supporting them to stop smoking and become more active, and by supporting health professionals to change their behaviour to improve the quality of care they provide.

There are a variety of ways to help people to change their behaviour, but these are often ineffective and need to be strengthened and adapted for different settings. Improving interventions depends on having accurate descriptions, especially of the 'active ingredients' that are responsible for bringing about change. In our previous work, we have developed a method for reporting interventions in terms of what are termed 'behaviour change techniques'. This has been useful both for those implementing interventions and for researchers. However, different methods have been developed for different behaviours and there was a need to bring these together in a single method that was useable by a wide range of people.

We report a 3-year project involving 400 researchers, practitioners and policy-makers from several countries that produced a 'taxonomy' of 93 behaviour change techniques with clear labels, definitions and examples. We also developed training in how to use it and evaluated its usefulness for reporting interventions. It was found to be reliable for 80 out of the 93 techniques and trainees achieved agreement with experts for frequently used techniques.

The taxonomy was labelled 'version 1' (or 'v1') in recognition of further work needed to develop it so that it is reliable across a wide range of types of user, intervention and context.

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