

# Options for weight loss your primary care doctor might not know about

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August 29, 2014 - Despite US Preventive Services Task Force recommendations for screening and treating obesity, there are many barriers, several of which may be ameliorated through technological approaches according to a new study by researchers at NYU Langone Medical Center published online August 21, 2014 in the *Journal of General Internal Medicine (JGIM)*.

David Levine, MD, MA, a third year resident in the Department of Internal Medicine at NYU Langone, and colleagues found that compared to usual care, technology-assisted interventions specifically in the [primary care](#) setting help patients achieve [weight loss](#). The researchers analyzed data from clinical trials from the medical literature since the year 2000 through a rigorous systematic review methodology. They found:

- Weight loss up to 5.4 kilograms (12 pounds) over a 36 month period with the use of technology-assisted interventions
- Technologies included
  - Web-based applications (such as <http://www.heart360.org>);
  - In-home DVD programs;
  - Software that guided doctors to better counsel their patients; and
- Self-monitoring and feedback systems. Technology-assisted

weight loss compared favorably to traditional counseling and Pharmacotherapy options (e.g., FDA-approved diet pills), while allowing for remote treatment.

- The doctor, compared to health coaches, dieticians, or nurse practitioners, was most often studied and was capable of delivering these technology-assisted weight loss interventions in the outpatient clinic.

Challenges still remain, including poor web utilization, improving ease-of-use for both provider and patient, allowing open access to technologies, and keeping pace with industry.

Weight loss is a common discussion in primary care, and thanks to this study, it is now one that should include technology-assisted interventions. This study helps providers recognize the utility and evidence-based option that technology-assisted weight loss interventions offer their primary care patients. Melanie Jay, MD, the study's senior author and Dr. Levine both noted, "We were very pleased that after critically looking at all of the available data, technology-assisted weight loss interventions can be successfully used in primary care practice."

Provided by New York University School of Medicine

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