# > BEHAVIOR CHANGE TECHNIQUES IN M-HEALTH APPLICATIONS FOR MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

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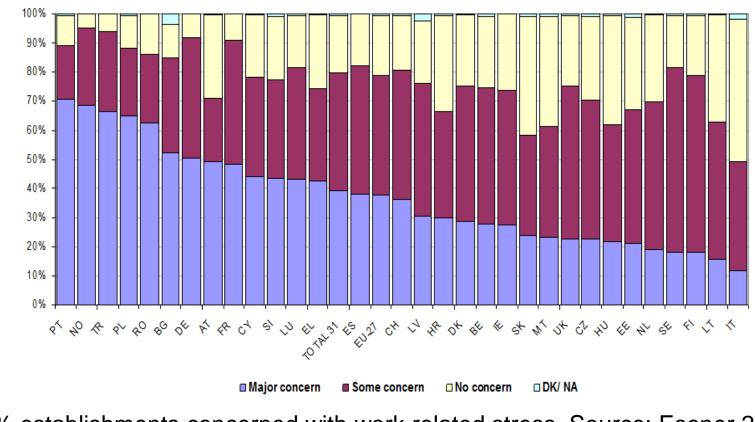
Noortje Wiezer





## **Risks in companies in Europe still existing**

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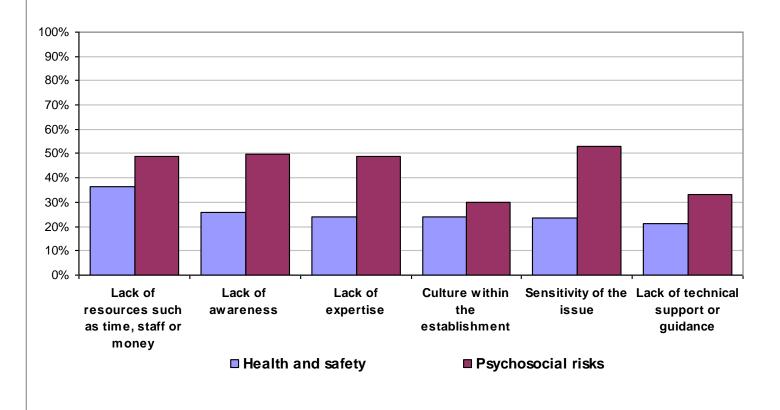


% establishments concerned with work related stress. Source: Esener 2009





#### **Obstacles for interventions**



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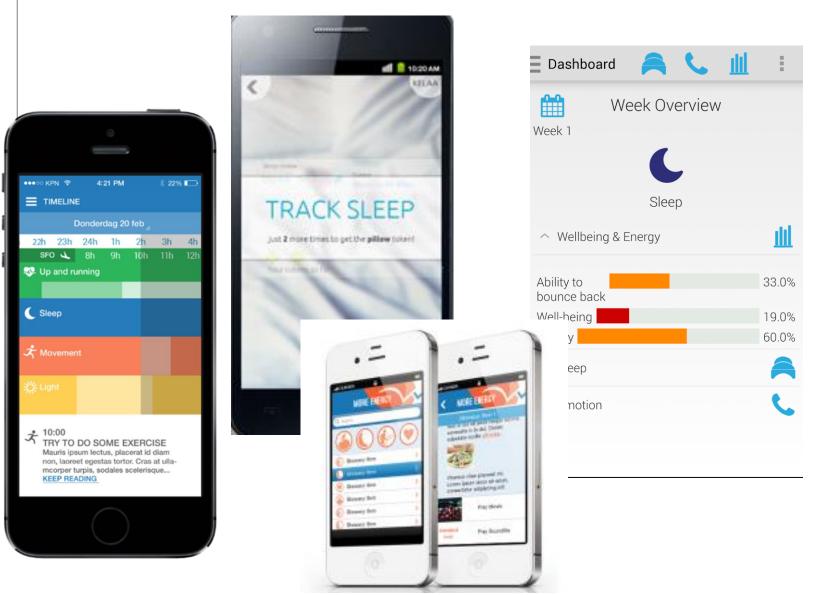
% establishments that indicated obstacles for interventions. Source: Esener 2009





Does information technology provides the solution?

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# Number of health apps is growing

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# M-health applications for work health promotion

- > Little is known on the quality and effectiveness of apps
- Research shows that health interventions are more effective if rooted in Behavioral Change Techniques (BCT's)
- Effective applications should be based on Behavioral Change Techniques as well





## Aim of the study and research questions

- Aim of the study: do M-health applications for work health promotion incorporate behavioral change techniques?
- Research questions
  - 1. Which BCT's are used in apps aiming at work health promotion?
  - 2. Which BCT's are not used in apps? And why?
  - 3. Based on a and b: new requirements?





# Behavioral Change Techniques Abraham and Michie (2008)

Behavior change techniques (Abraham & Michie, 2008)

- 1. Provide information about behavior health link
- 2. Provide information on consequences
- 3. Provide information about others' approval
- 4. Prompt intention
- 5. Prompt barrier identification
- 6. Provide general encouragement
- 7. Set graded tasks
- 8. Provide instruction
- 9. Model/ demonstrate the behavior
- 10. Prompt specific goal setting
- 11. Prompt review of behavioral goals
- 12. Prompt self-monitoring of behavior
- 13. Provide feedback on performance

- 14. Provide contingent rewards
- 15. Teach to use prompts/ cues
- 16. Agree behavioral contract
- 17. Prompt practice
- 18. Use follow up prompts
- 19. Provide opportunities for social comparison
- 20. Plan social support/ social change
- 21. Prompt identification as role model
- 22. Prompt self-talk
- 23. Relapse prevention
- 24. Stress management
- 25. Motivational interviewing
- 26. Time management





#### Approach

- Searched for applications in Itunes and Google Play
- Used a long list of search terms (for example: sitting and work, physical work, work health, work demands, wellbeing, workstress)
  Inclusion criteria:

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- ≻Aimed at an individual
- ≻Aimed at healthy adults
- ➤Work related
- ➢ Personalized feedback
- ➢English or Dutch
- Stress prevention and/or psychosocial risk reduction and/or physical risk reduction and/or healthy lifestyle at work promotion





# **Results 1: Applications included**

	Number
Total number of apps downloaded or looked into	304
Total number of apps included	44
Physical risk prevention	14
Psychosocial risk prevention	21
Lifestyle promotion	33
Itunes	22
Google Play	13
Itunes and Google Play	9
Free	28
Access code	3
Payed (€2,40 average)	13

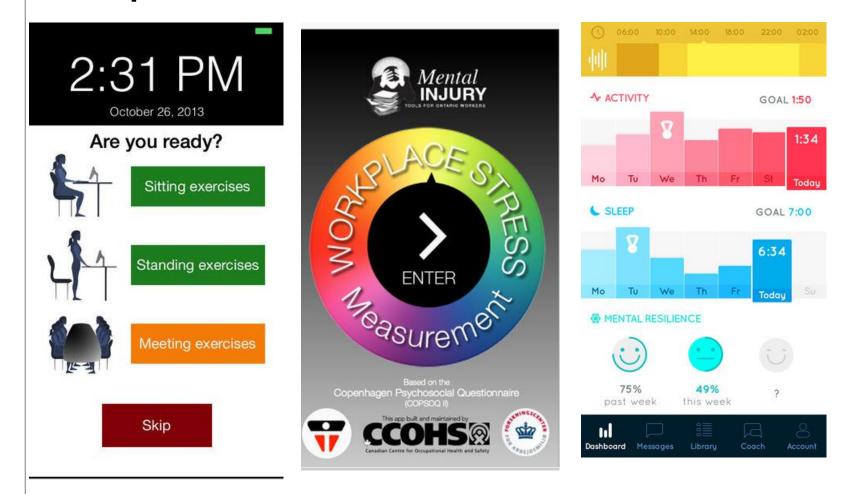
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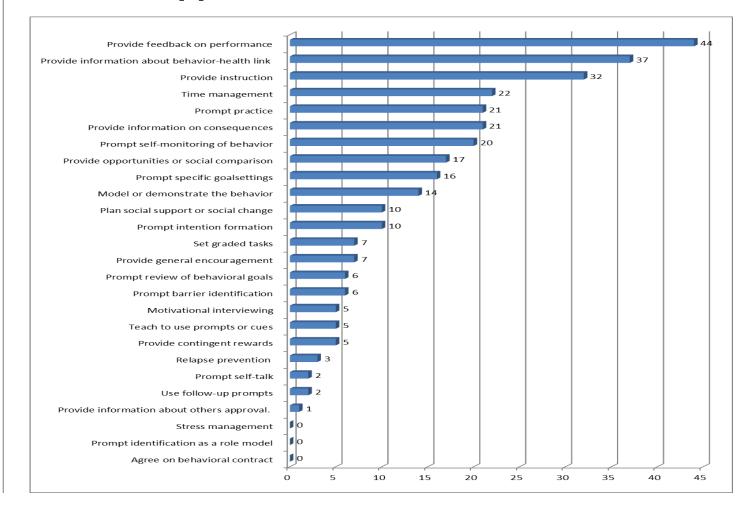
#### **Examples**







#### **BCT's in applications**







# **BCT's applied in applications**

Average number of BCT's in applications	7,1
Highest number of BCT's in an application	16
Lowest number of BCT's in an application	2



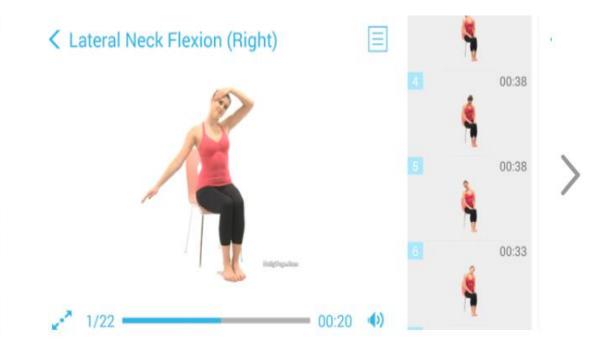




#### **Examples**



Prompt practice



Model or demonstrate the behavior







#### Next step

- > Expert meeting (with app developers).
- > Question (for expert meeting, but also for you):
- > Some BCT's are never or hardly ever scored: why not?
  - Technical constraints
  - > Not a relevant BCT for apps?
  - > Never thought off..





#### Conclusion

- In most applications some behavioral change techniques are used, but the number differs
- Some techniques are used very often (provide information)
- > Others are not used (prompt identification as a role model)
- We did not systematically reviewed the content and the quality of the information given, but there are large differences in quality between applications







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