

Black smokers can quit with a smartphone app

Peer reviewed: Yes

Method of research: Randomised controlled/clinical trial

Subject of study: People

Smoking is a major health problem among Black or African American adults, but few tools are tailored to help them quit. The iCanQuit smartphone application was more effective than a more conventional smartphone application (QuitGuide) at getting Black US adults who smoke to quit and remain abstinent over 12 months.

The iCanQuit smartphone application uses acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) to help people who smoke quit. ACT-based interventions teach people to observe, acknowledge, and accept their cravings to smoke rather than avoid them, and use life values such as religiosity, spirituality, family, and collectivism as motivation to quit.

This secondary analysis of data from a randomised controlled trial found that Black adults who smoked daily and used iCanQuit had greater odds of quitting cigarette smoking at the 3, 6, and 12-month follow-ups than QuitGuide users. The odds of prolonged abstinence at 12 months were 2.86 times higher among iCanQuit than QuitGuide participants. iCanQuit participants were also significantly more engaged with the application, as measured by the number of logins from baseline to 6 months (an average of 30.9 times for iCanQuit vs. 9.7 for QuitGuide).

These findings are important because compared with the general US population, Black adults who smoke are less likely to quit (63.9% vs. 46.1%), have more difficulty quitting, and are less likely to seek treatment. Smartphone applications can potentially enhance treatment reach among Black adults by remotely teaching users an evidence-based approach to quitting that is available 24/7 while incorporating interactive tools and features to keep the user engaged long-term.

This study used data from 554 self-identified Black adults who smoked daily from 34 US states.

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For editors:

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