Technology for health promotion

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Research shows that interventions to promote a healthy lifestyle work best with children between the ages of 3 and 6. This has prompted us to launch the Programa SÍ! and other similar initiatives that have made waves even in the US.

Nonetheless, we can't close our eyes to the adult population, who are currently the most affected by the risk factors that lead to cardiovascular disease. At the CNIC, as in many other research organizations, scientists are investigating how to promote life style changes in this challenging population, who have already acquired unhealthy habits.

Without going that far, I think that these devices can be an excellent tool for health promotion, and with the Pro CNIC Foundation we have put this conviction into practice with the launch of a new app, El círculo de la salud. The app has already been downloaded by thousands of users, a number set to rise soon with the launch of the English language version, Circle of Health.

I have always been interested in technology, something that is very evident from all my work on diagnostic imaging techniques. But health promotion can also be fostered through the accessible everyday technology of mobile phone and tablets. My fellow cardiologist Eric Topol, considered one of the originators of m-Health, predicted years ago that smart phones would come to be used to monitor our vital signs.

The key to preventing the six modifiable risk factors for cardiovascular disease is to keep appropriate healthy habits continuously in mind. And the app achieves precisely this, by repeating, repeating, and repeating reminders of what users should do, or to be more precise, avoid doing, to maintain themselves in top form.

Our hope is that Circle of Health will be an indisputable advance in research— many others of which have been driven by technology—in the fight against cardiovascular disease that spurs us on.

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