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# Modifying the Stages of Change Model to Assess Healthy Behaviours

Dr. Tamara Street & Sarah Lacey

# Background

Corporate health: identify and manage risks

Behaviour change programs based on theory and tailored

Stages of Change model (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982)

# Stages of Change model

**Maintenance**

**Perseverance of Healthy Behaviours**

**Action**

**Enthusiasm and Momentum to Change**

**Preparation**

**Anticipation and Willingness to Change**

**Contemplation**

**Awareness of Unhealthy Behaviours  
and openness to change**

**Precontemplation**

**Unhealthy, Unaware and Resistant to  
Change**

# Assessment of readiness for healthy behaviors

Concise and reliable assessment

University of Rhode Island Change Assessment Scale (URICA)  
(McConnaughey, DiClemente, Prochaska, & Valicer, 1989).

- URICA item for precontemplation states, *“As far as I’m concerned, I don’t have any problems that need changing”*.
- Physical activity and nutrition, often aware but apathetic.
- Precontemplation should capture individuals that are NOT currently meeting the guidelines for healthy behaviours.



# Aim

Develop and evaluate a modified precontemplation measure of Prochaska and DiClemente's (1982) Stages of Change model for the assessment of healthy behaviours in an Australian workforce sample.

# Method - Sample

Self-report data from a rural  
Australian mining site.

897 employees

74% male

Mean age 36.9 years



# Method - Measurements

| Stage of Change  | Survey Measure  |
|------------------|---|
| Maintenance      | I took action more than 6 months ago to change my (exercise / eating habits) and I'm working hard to maintain this change   |
| Action           | I am doing something to improve my (exercise / eating) habits   |
| Preparation      | I have definite plans to improve my (exercise / eating) habits in the next month  |
| Contemplation    | I am seriously intending to improve my (exercise / eating) habits in the next month   |
| Precontemplation | <b>Traditional Measure</b> As far as I'm concerned my (exercise / eating) habits don't need changing<br><b>Modified Measure</b> I know I should improve my (exercise / eating) habits but I don't intend to |



# Physical Activity Results

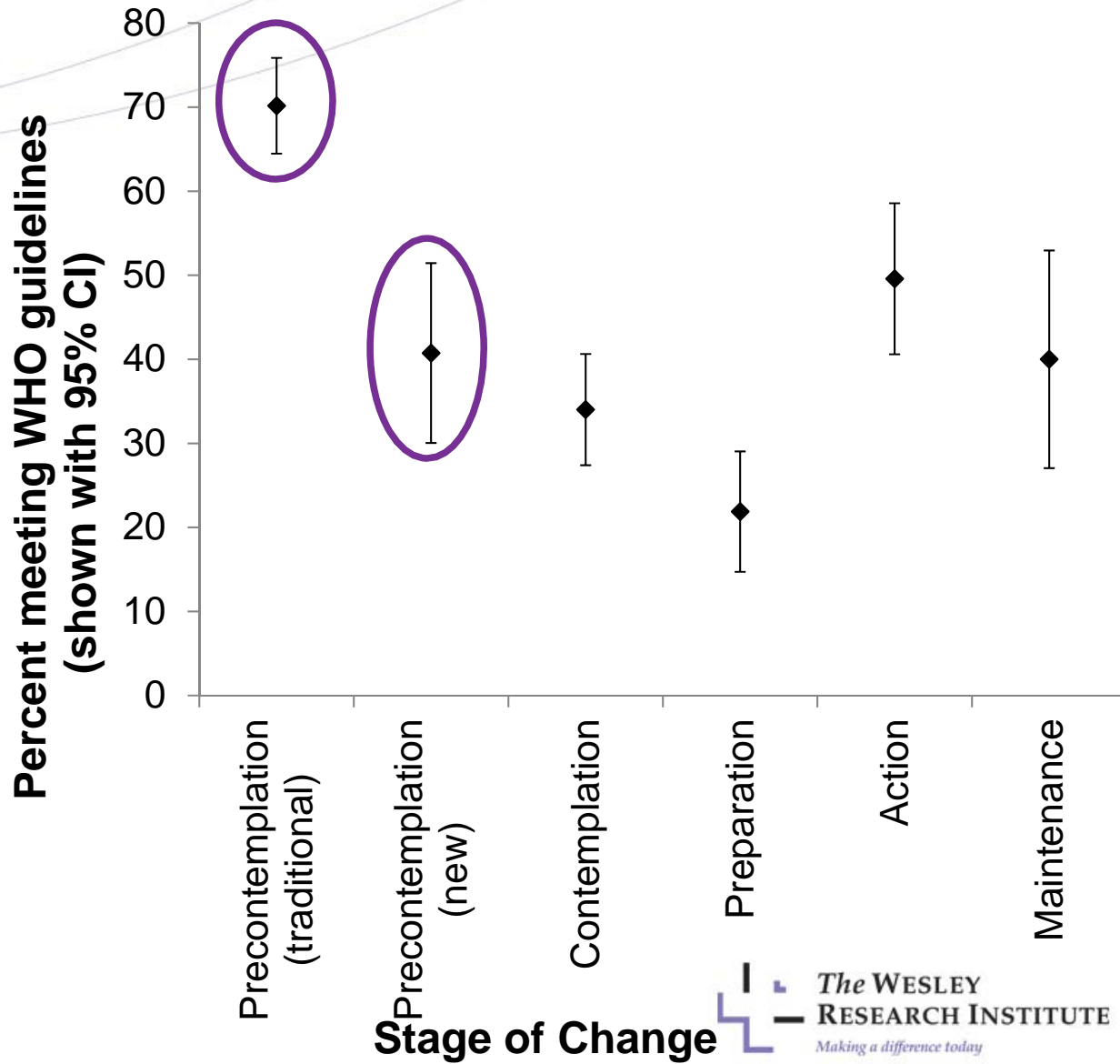
46% of participants met WHO guidelines of 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week.

70% ( $n = 174$ ) of participants who identified with the traditional precontemplation stage measure met the guideline.



By comparison, only 40% ( $n = 33$ ) of those who identified with the modified precontemplation stage measure met the guideline.

# Physical Activity Results



# Nutrition Results

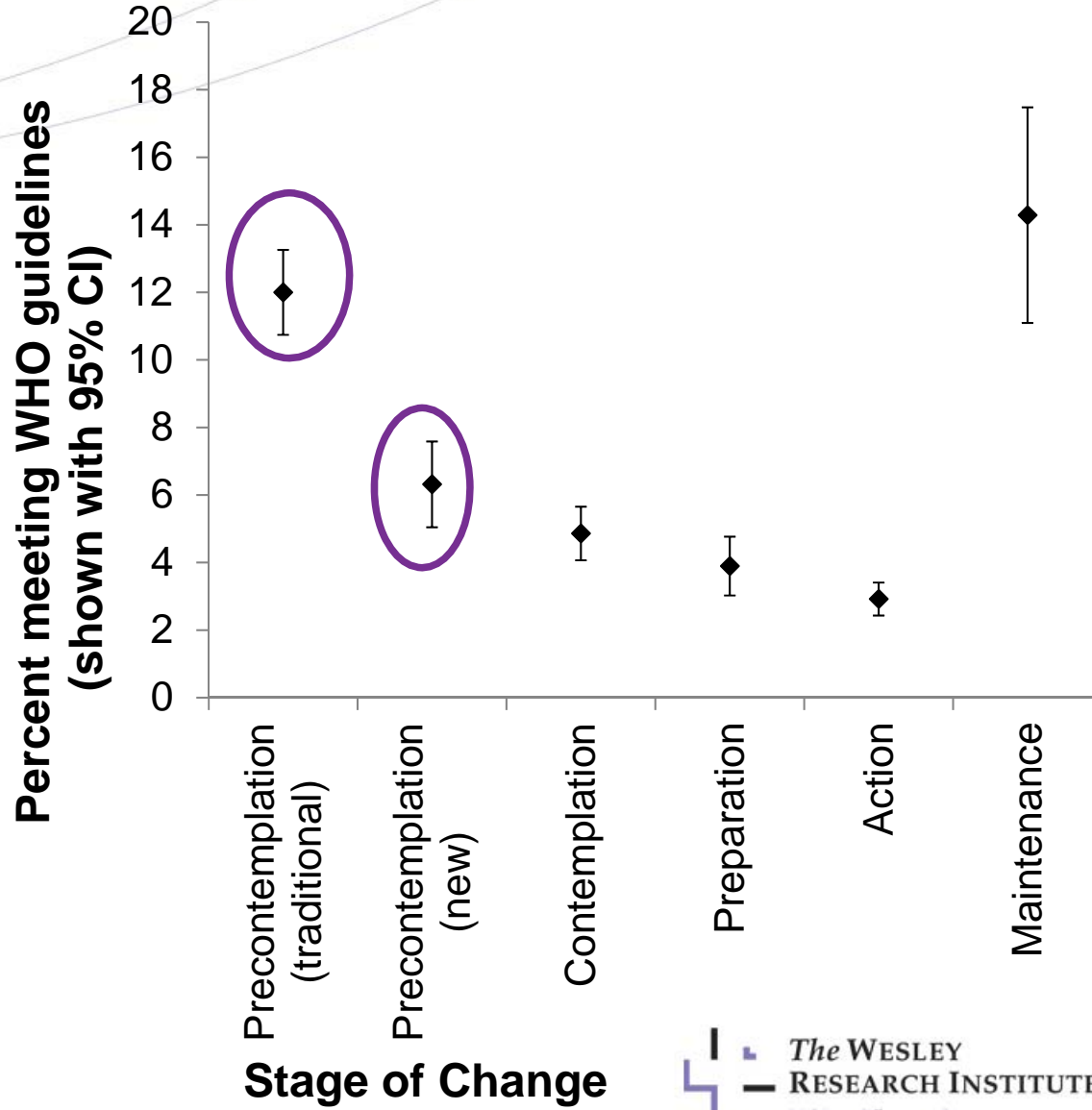
8% of participants met WHO guideline of 5 vegetables and 2 fruit per day.

12% ( $n = 42$ ) of participants who identified with the traditional precontemplation stage measure met the guideline.



By comparison, only 6% ( $n = 6$ ) of those who identified with the modified precontemplation stage measure met the guideline.

# Nutrition Results



# Discussion

Although the modified measures were associated with a reduced likelihood of capturing individuals who met the WHO guidelines (compared to the traditional measures), both measures captured individuals currently satisfying the WHO guidelines for healthy behaviours.

The traditional maintenance question may need modification. Reference to changing the behaviour “more than 6 months ago” is not appropriate for persons who have never engaged in the unhealthy behaviour.

# Discussion

Adjusting the maintenance measure to include people that have sustained the healthy behaviour for an extended period of time may reduce the indices of healthy individuals identifying with lower stages of change.

As far as I'm concerned my exercise habits don't need changing

I took action more than 6 months ago to change my exercise habits and I'm working hard to maintain this change

# Implications

Progress has been made towards achieving a concise and reliable measure of readiness to change healthy behaviours for use in the general population.

May need to screen out individuals meeting guidelines.

Further refinement and evaluation is recommended.



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