

# DIGITALIZE From static to dynamic health promotion:

## How adolescents use online digital platforms to support their health behaviours



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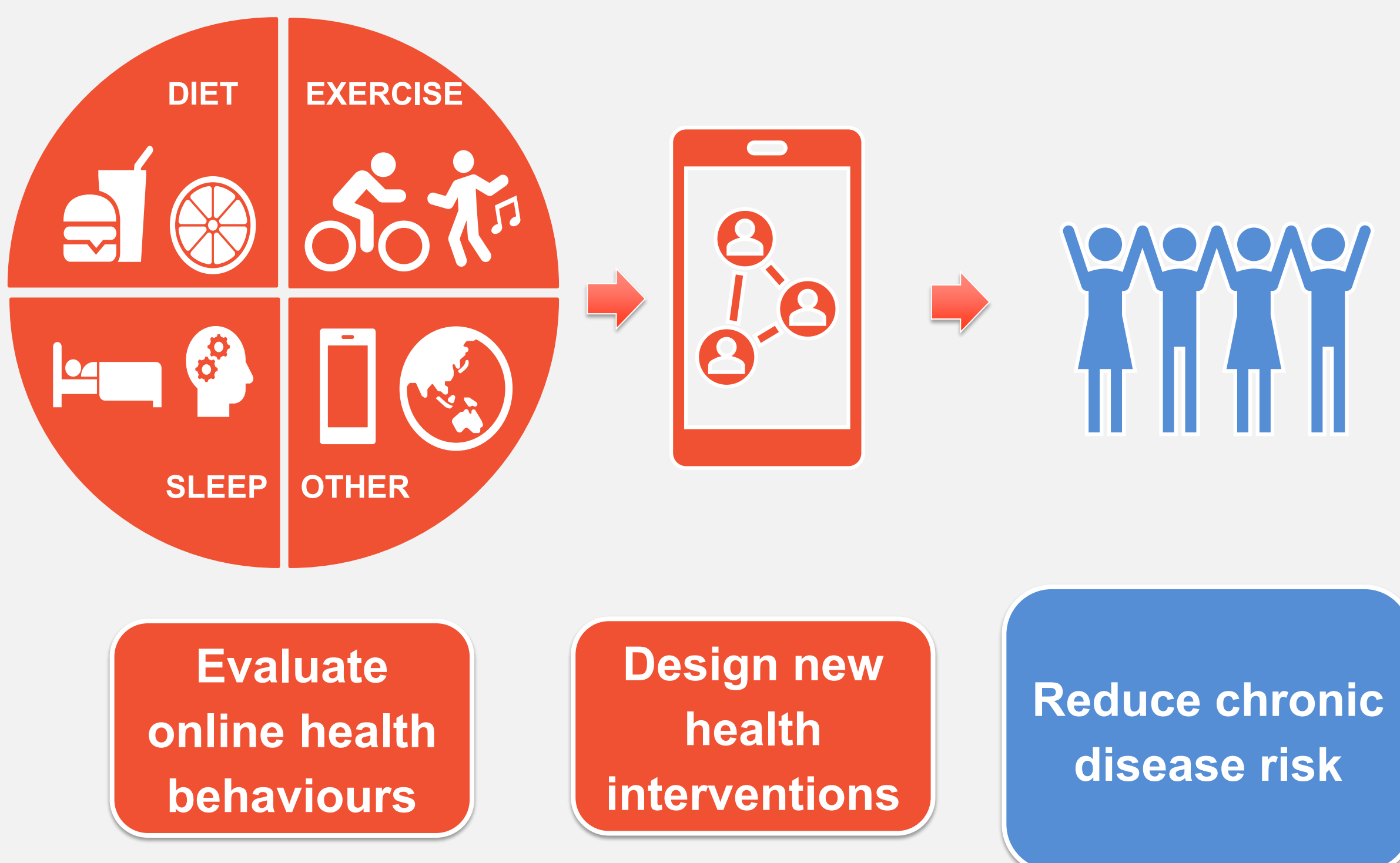
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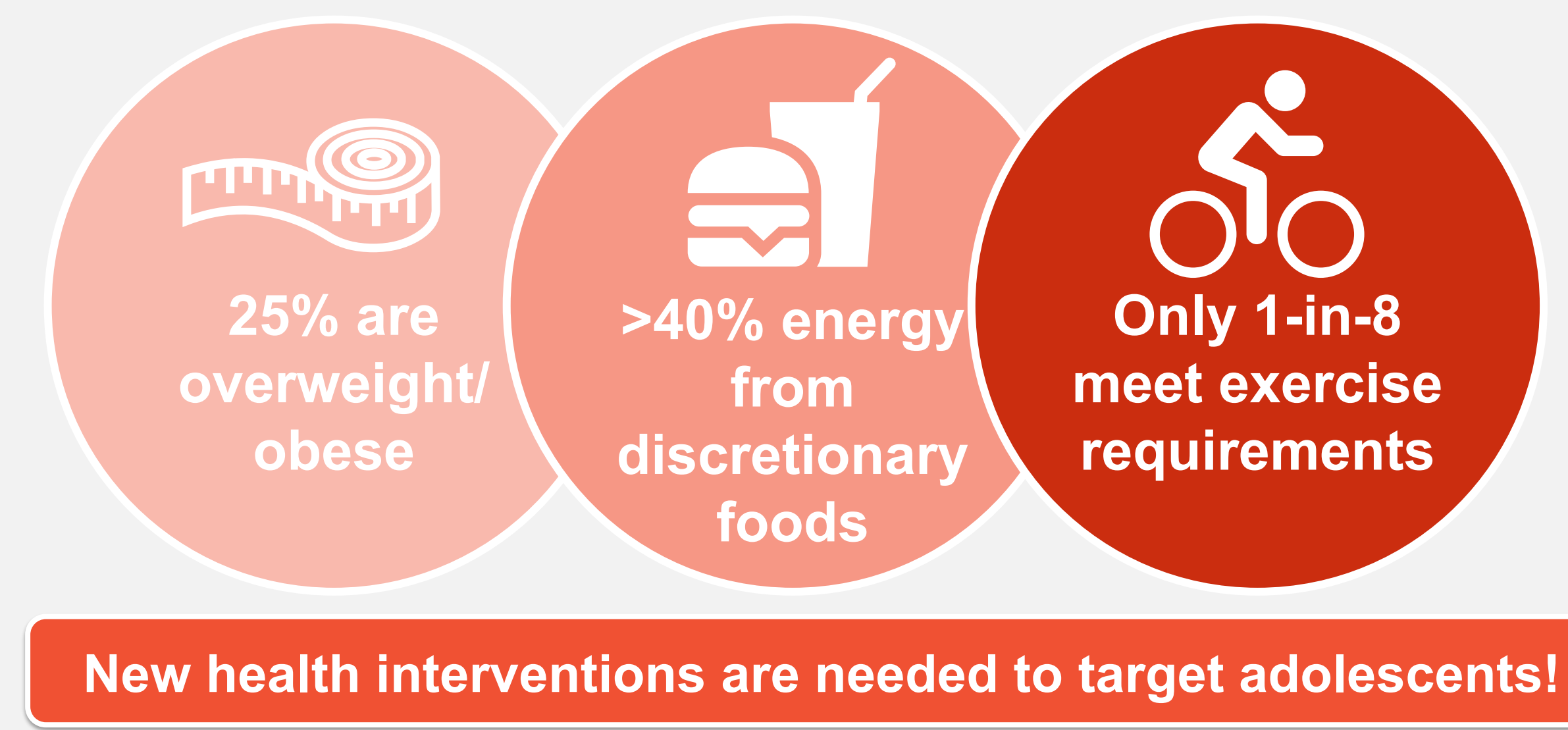
### Background

Supportive digital environments are necessary to encourage adolescents to make positive health behaviour change<sup>1</sup>. Globally, adolescents comprise the **most active internet users**<sup>2</sup>. Access to high quality online health support is particularly important as adolescents become **reliant on the internet** for health-related purposes<sup>3</sup>. However, little is known regarding where and how adolescents' access digital lifestyle health information and support. As new digital platforms emerge, further research into how adolescents utilise these platforms for lifestyle health is needed to **guide future health interventions** and policies. An online cross-sectional survey was undertaken to evaluate adolescent online health behaviours.



#### Why digital health for adolescents?

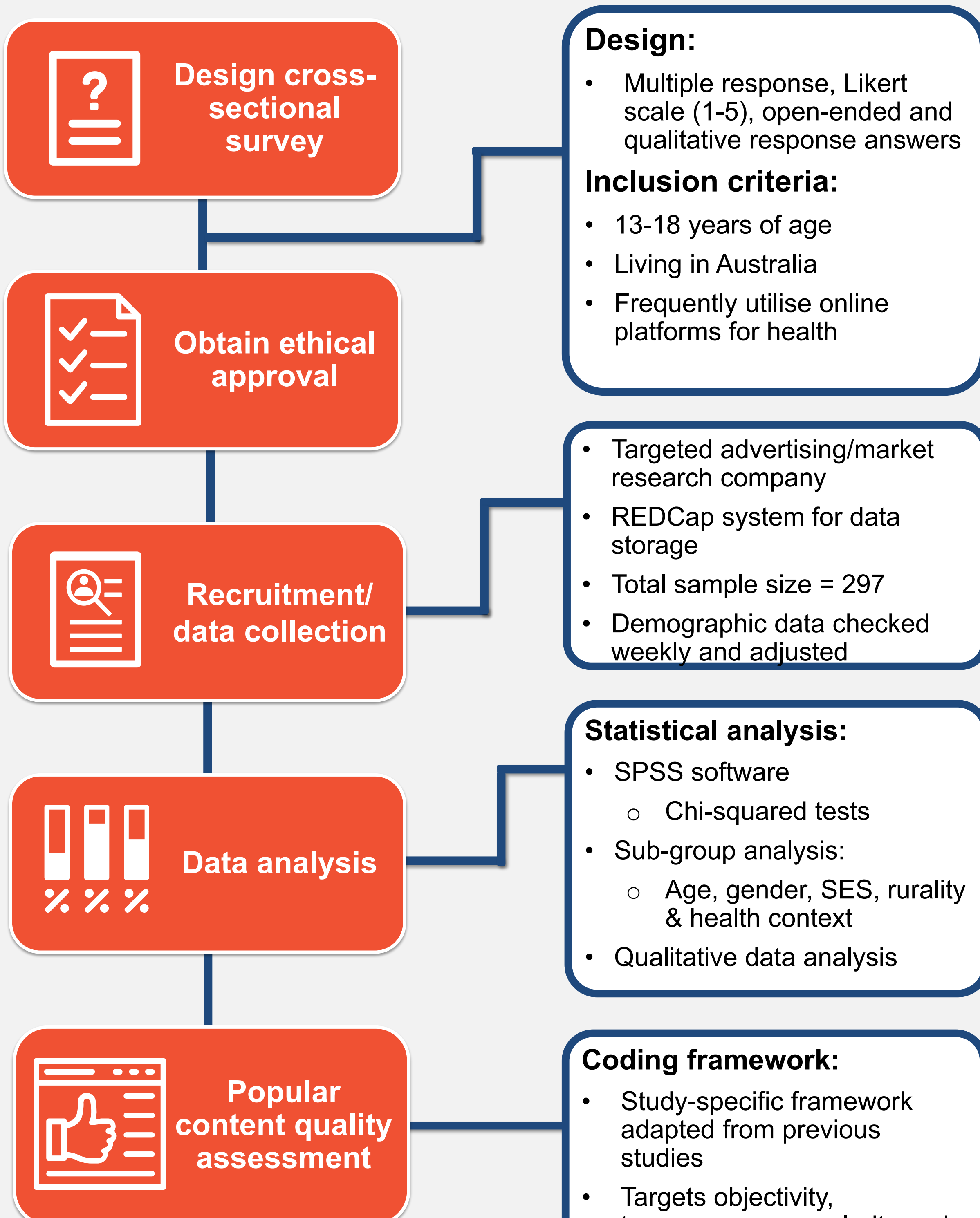
- **Targeted health interventions** to combat health issues within society are needed.
- **Obesity rates** are rising among adolescents.
- **Digital health interventions** can **engage adolescents** in health more **effectively** than traditional approaches.



### Research questions

- 1 What digital platforms are adolescents currently using to seek lifestyle health-related information?
- 2 Are these digital platforms helpful for lifestyle health-related purposes?
- 3 What is the quality of the most popular content of these digital platforms?

### Research plan



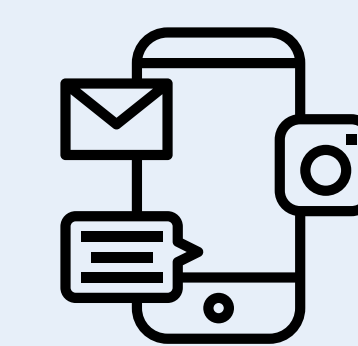
### Results

#### Key results

- **Social media and websites** are the **most popular** platforms for health-related purposes.
- **Smartphones apps** are the **most helpful** platform for health-related purposes.
- Adolescents want to see more health content on social media.
- Adolescents seek information from a **wide variety of sources**, of differing content quality.

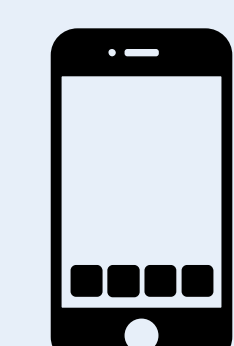
#### Social media (n=228, 77%)

- 64% utilise 1-2 times a month /once a week for health
- 47% consider somewhat helpful
- 53% agree/strongly agree lifestyle change occurs via social media
- YouTube and Instagram are the most popular
- Adolescents want to see more health information on social media



#### Smartphone apps (n=92, 33%)

- 52% utilise a few times a week or more
- 54% consider very/extremely helpful
- 66% of adolescents agree/strongly agree that lifestyle change occurs through apps
- Adolescents want personalised and easy to follow content, at no cost



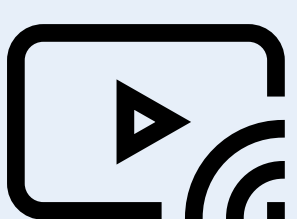
#### Internet websites (n=232, 78%)

- 80% utilise 1-2 times a month/once a week for health
- 43% consider somewhat helpful
- 52% neither agree nor disagree lifestyle change occurs via internet websites
- Adolescents want user-friendly information from credible sources, which is age-appropriate



#### Streaming services (n=86, 31%)

- 81% utilise 1-2 times a month/once a week for health
- 38% consider slightly helpful/not helpful at all
- 40% of adolescents neither agree nor disagree on lifestyle changes that occur
- Netflix overwhelmingly most popular platform
- Programs on health trends, pharmaceutical industries and environment impact are popular



#### Content quality assessment

- 782 popular people, pages, apps, websites, streams and searches identified.
- 54% of content listed were individuals or organisations who had commercial interests, and 11% were a government or health organisation.
- 59% of all content was relevant to nutrition, 51% was relevant to weight management, 50% to physical activity, and 22% to sleep. 6% had no relevance to lifestyle health.
- 37% of content was found to be objective, only 12% were transparent about partnerships.

### Conclusions and future directions

- 1 Social media, internet websites, smartphone apps and streaming services are **all used for health purposes**, however social media and internet websites are the most frequently utilised platforms.
- 2 Social media, smartphone apps and internet websites are considered helpful, however, **smartphone apps are considered the most helpful** platform that promotes lifestyle change.
- 3 Adolescents seek information from a **diverse variety of sources**. Most of the content had relevance to lifestyle health, however also had commercial interests. Most content was neither objective or transparent.

Provides key information on how to more effectively target adolescents with health

Focus groups would provide further important qualitative insights

This information will need to be updated as the digital landscape shifts over time

#### References

1. WHO, 2014. Health for the World's Adolescents. *A second chance in the second decade*.
2. Sawyer, S.M., Azzopardi, P.S., Wickremaratne, D. and Patton, G.C., 2018. The age of adolescence. *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*, 2(3), pp.223-228.
3. Reid Chassiakos, YL, Radesky, J, Christakis, D, Moreno, MA, Cross, C, Hill, D, Ameenuddin, N, Hutchinson, J, Levine, A, Boyd, R, Mendelson, R, & Swanson, WS 2016, 'Children and Adolescents and Digital Media.' *Pediatrics*, vol. 138, no. 5, pp. e20162593-e20162593, doi: 10.1542/peds.2016-2593.