“Changing Health Behavior without Changing Beliefs”

Because decision makers frequently fail to engage in healthy actions, behavior change has the potential to radically impact health outcomes. Successfully influencing health behavior requires an understanding of the decision processes underlying health choices and techniques to harness those psychological factors in the service of effective interventions. Using vaccination as an example, evidence is reviewed indicating that interventions designed to target behavior directly, bypassing attempts to change beliefs or attitudes, facilitate healthy choices. Such interventions leverage automaticity and shape behavior through cues and prompts, defaults, recommendations, and behavioral incentives.