SWAT 83: Postal vs telephone follow-up

Objective of this SWAT
To analyse response rate and data quality between postal and telephone follow-up.

Study area: Follow-up, Data Quality, Completion Rate
Sample type: Patients
Estimated funding level needed: Low

Background
The aim of the sub-study is to analyse whether using post or telephone for completing follow-up questionnaires provides similar qualitative and quantitative data. Previous research with stroke patients has shown completion rates to be overall similar, although the postal route takes longer and the telephone route is more expensive.[1] In other research, telephone follow-up was effective in the initial phase postoperatively,[2] and as a secondary measure to improve the rate of response when patients failed to respond to postal questionnaires.[2,3]

A Cochrane review of strategies to improve recruitment to randomised trials[4] suggested that clinical trials should consider including a SWAT (Study Within A Trial), to gather further evidence on methodologies within trial recruitment, thus providing an evidence base for improving recruitment and retention to clinical trials in the future.

This SWAT is being embedded in a randomised trial assessing the effectiveness of iron supplementation in the non-anaemic iron deficient patient population undergoing lower limb arthroplasty.

Interventions and comparators
Intervention 1: Postal follow-up for completion of FACIT-Fatigue questionnaire and EQ5D-5L Quality of Life Questionnaire
Intervention 2: Telephone follow-up for completion of FACIT-Fatigue questionnaire and EQ5D-5L Quality of Life Questionnaire

Index Type: Method of Follow-up

Method for allocating to intervention or comparator
Randomisation

Outcome measures
Primary: Completion rate of follow-up questionnaires
Secondary: Quality of data received

Analysis plans
To be created.

Possible problems in implementing this SWAT
Patient recruitment.

References

Publications or presentations of this SWAT design
Examples of the implementation of this SWAT

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