

# 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

1. Lannin NA, Anderson C, Lim J, et al. Telephone follow-up was more expensive but more efficient than postal in a national stroke registry. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology* 2013;66(8):896-902.
2. Burch J. Enhanced recovery and nurse-led telephone follow-up post surgery. *British Journal of Nursing* 2012;
3. Lalla R, Mistry D, Bridle C, Lambab SE. Telephone interviews can be used to collect follow-up data subsequent to no response to postal questionnaires in clinical trials. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology* 2012;65(1):90-9.
4. Treweek S, Pitkethly M, Cook J, et al. Strategies to improve recruitment to randomised trials. *Cochrane Database of Systematic* 2018;(2):MR000013.

## Publications or presentations of this SWAT design

## **Examples of the implementation of this SWAT**

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