SWAT 115: Comparisons of invitation methods used to recruit participants to a trial of a smoking reduction intervention

Objective of this SWAT
To assess the efficiency of three methods for recruiting participants from GP practices to a randomised trial of a smoking reduction intervention

Study area: Recruitment
Sample type: Participants
Estimated funding level needed: Very Low

Background
Recruitment is one of the major challenges facing those running clinical trials and effective ways to increase the recruitment of eligible participants (and to retain them) need to be identified. One of the factors influencing recruitment may be the method used for the initial invitation to potential participants. This SWAT will investigate this in the TARS study. TARS is a multi-centre randomised trial of tailored support as an aid to reducing smoking. It is recruiting participants from GP practices across four cities in England (ISRCTN47776579).

In a pilot study in 2011-12, a recruitment rate of 5.1% was achieved using invitation letters sent out by practices, when smoking prevalence was higher and perhaps those who remain smoking are harder to reach. In TARS, initial recruitment was lower, at 2%. This SWAT was introduced to explore which of three different invitations might improve recruitment and the associated costs.

Interventions and comparators
Intervention 1: Full postal invitation pack, costing approximately GP£1.00 per person, using DOCMAIL. This includes a standard cover letter, Participant Information Sheet and Freepost reply slip. The person has the option to provide an expression of interest by (i) telephone, (ii) email, (iii) visiting study website, (iv) sms or (v) post reply slip.
Intervention 2: Single-page postal invitation, costing approximately GP£0.55 using DOCMAIL (a standard cover letter). The person has the option to provide an expression of interest to the trial team by (i) telephone, (ii) email, (iii) visiting study website or (iv) sms.
Intervention 3: Text message with no or minimal cost (a standard text message). The person has the option to provide an expression of interest to the trial team by (i) telephone, (ii) email or (iii) visiting study website.

Index Type: Method of Invitation

Method for allocating to intervention or comparator
Randomisation

Outcome measures
Primary: Proportion of invited people who are recruited to the trial
Cost of invitation method per recruited participant.
Secondary:

Analysis plans
Descriptive analysis
• Recruitment rate by invitation method
• Cost per person recruited by invitation method
No formal statistical comparison of the groups is planned.

Possible problems in implementing this SWAT

References
Publications or presentations of this SWAT design
https://az659834.vo.msecnd.net/eventsairwesteuprod/production-inconference-public/fe8d0a1d39e7403da5745e4b9fab416e

Examples of the implementation of this SWAT

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