

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

Hancocks H, King J, Gude A, et al. The effect of the method of invitation on recruitment of participants from GP practices to a trial of a smoking reduction intervention: a study within a trial. International Clinical Trials Methodology Conference. Brighton, UK, 2019:P-143

<https://az659834.vo.msecnd.net/eventsairwesteuprod/production-inconference-public/fe8d0a1d39e7403da5745e4b9fab416e>

Examples of the implementation of this SWAT

People to show as the source of this idea: TARS team (Adrian Taylor, Helen Hancocks, Siobhan Creanor)

Acknowledgements: Shaun Treweek (Health Services Research Unit, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, UK); Jennie King & Alex Gude (Faculty of Health: Medicine, Dentistry and Human Sciences, University of Plymouth, Plymouth, UK)

Contact email address: tars.team@plymouth.ac.uk

Date of idea: 10/JUL/2017

Revisions made by:

Date of revisions: