SWAT 129: Effects of video guidance and a helpdesk on recruitment and retention in a Delphi survey for the development of a core outcome set

Objective of this SWAT
To assess the effects on response and retention of providing video guidance on how to complete a Delphi survey and an email helpdesk in an online Delphi survey for the development of a core outcome set.

Study area: Recruitment, Retention
Sample type: Patients
Estimated funding level needed: Low

Background
Core outcome set (COS) development typically seeks consensus from multiple stakeholders on which outcomes are critically important to measure, as a minimum, in research. Whilst COS development studies use various methods to seek opinion and achieve consensus, around a third use a Delphi survey, either alone or with another method.[1] Research has shown that some patient participants might appreciate assistance when completing a Delphi survey,[2] but there has been little evaluation of what type of assistance should be provided and evaluations of participant satisfaction have been retrospective.[3]

Those retrospective evaluations have shown participant satisfaction with online videos that explain the Delphi process.[3] However, the development of a supporting video and provision of other assistance (such as a helpdesk) requires resources and, therefore, it is important to have evidence on their effectiveness. This SWAT will evaluate the impact on recruitment and retention of providing additional support in the form of guidance videos and a helpdesk, specifically to patients (and other members of the public) taking part in a Delphi survey.

Interventions and comparators
Intervention 1: Patients receive additional participant information in the form of a video that explains how to complete the online Delphi survey (a separate video for each Delphi round provided at relevant time points i.e. round 1 video at registration, in the participant information sheet (PIS), and on the round 1 homepage and round 2 video provided with the invitation to round 2 and on the round 2 homepage) plus a helpdesk pop-up feature in the DelphiManager software,[4] which links to a monitored email account with responses sent within one working day.
Intervention 2: Patients receive the standard PIS with no supporting videos. The PIS includes an email address to use to contact the study team, but no pop-up help function in the Delphi survey. Responses to emails will be provided within one working day.

Index Type: Participant Information

Method for allocating to intervention or comparator
Randomisation

Outcome measures
Primary: Completion of the Delphi survey. This will be analysed by calculating the proportion of patients, contacted from a mailing list, who complete the second round of the survey.
Secondary: Full completion of round 1 of the Delphi survey. This will be analysed by calculating the proportion of patients, contacted from a mailing list, who fully complete the first round of the survey.
Partial or full completion of round 1.
Attrition between round 1 and round 2. This will be analysed by calculating the proportion of patients invited to round 2 who do not complete round 2.
Expression of interest in taking part in the study consensus meeting. This will be analysed by calculating the proportion of those completing round 2 who express an interest in joining this meeting.

Analysis plans

The difference in registration and completion rates (as described above) between those receiving additional video information and a help desk and those not allocated to it will be calculated.
A descriptive summary of the nature of emails received via the helpdesk or by direct email will be reported.
A flow chart of the analysis plan is available here:
https://www.dropbox.com/s/amfy1h4uuop10vj/SCOUT%20SWAT%20flowchart%20V3.0.png?dl=0

Possible problems in implementing this SWAT
This SWAT requires pseudo-randomisation of a pre-defined list of potential study participants.

References
1. Gargon E, Gorst SL, Williamson PR. Choosing important health outcomes for comparative effectiveness research: 5th annual update to a systematic review of core outcome sets for research. PLOS One 2019;14(12):e0225980.
2. Biggane AM, Williamson PR, Ravaud P, Young B. Participating in core outcome set development via Delphi surveys: qualitative interviews provide pointers to inform guidance. BMJ Open 2019;9(11):e032338.
3. Hall DA, Smith H, Heffernan E, Fackrell K, Core Outcome Measures in Tinnitus International Delphi Research Steering G. Recruiting and retaining participants in e-Delphi surveys for core outcome set development: Evaluating the COMiT'ID study. PLoS One 2018;13(7):e0201378.
4. http://www.comet-initiative.org/delphimanager/ (accessed 20 August 2020).

Publications or presentations of this SWAT design

Examples of the implementation of this SWAT
This SWAT has been implemented in the FSR-SCOUT Study. https://www.stopsarcoidosis.org/wp-content/uploads/SCOUT-Protocol-V2.0-4-5-20202.pdf

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