

M-Health vs Leaflet Interventions for Older People's Quality of Life

Objectives: To compare the effects of m-health and leaflet oral health promotion for patients aged 65 years and over on oral health quality of life after 12 months+ follow-up.

Methods: Dental patients (n = 150) at an outreach primary dental care centre, ≥ 65 years old, were recruited and randomly allocated to 10-week m-Oral health text messages or once-off leaflet intervention arms. Baseline and 12 months plus Oral Health Related Quality of life OHIP14 questionnaires were administered. Using Paired-Samples t-test, the effect of either intervention was investigated.

Results: A total of 112 participants were followed up. Losses to follow-up included death and shielding due to the Covid-19 pandemic which started 6 months into the study period. At follow-up there were 53 participants in the text group and 49 in the leaflet group. Before the intervention, the text group OHIP scores were (M=8.25, SD=9.92), and at follow-up (M=8.25, SD=9.60) conditions; $t(52) = -2.31$, $p = 0.818$. While the leaflet group scores were (M=9.55, SD=8.29) and (M=8.29, SD=7.12) respectively; conditions; $t(48) = 1.13$, $p = 0.263$.

Conclusions: There were significant unforeseen limitations due to the Covid-19 pandemic which limited routine access to dental care and follow-up times for the participants as this was a pragmatic study. The pandemic stopped access to routine dentistry and worsened oral health. The findings point towards the participants OHIP scores staying the same or improving although this is not statistically significant. We aim to discuss that these findings suggest a positive influence of the interventions. Our 6-month follow-up, 3 months after m-health intervention ended, did find that participants welcomed the interventions and more would recommend m-Health at a statistically significant level. Another study is required to consider appropriate intervals and lengths of m-Health interventions

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