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Assessing the effect of informative photo referral cards on eye care access in Kwale County, Kenya

Submission date 25/11/2025	**Recruitment status** No longer recruiting	[_] Prospectively registered [X] Protocol
Registration date 19/12/2025	**Overall study status** Ongoing	[_] Statistical analysis plan [_] Results
Last Edited 09/12/2025	**Condition category** Eye Diseases	[_] Individual participant data [X] Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
The Vision Impact Project (VIP) is a community eye health programme in Kenya. Previous research showed that many people referred for eye care do not attend the outreach clinics, especially younger men. This study aims to find out if giving people a referral card with their photo and clinic details can help more people attend. The card will include information about services, costs, opening hours, and contact details. If this works, it could improve access to eye care and guide future programmes.

Who can participate?
Adults in Kenya who have eye problems and are referred to local outreach clinics can take part.

What does the study involve?
Everyone in the study will receive counselling and text reminders after being referred. Some participants will also get a referral card with their photo and clinic information. Others will not receive the card. We will then check who attends the clinic.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
The main benefit is that participants may find it easier to attend the clinic and get the eye care they need. There are no known risks from taking part.

Where is the study run from?
The study is run by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine in partnership with local teams in Kenya.

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
The study started in September 2025 and will run until March 2026.

Who is funding the study?
The study is funded by the Wellcome Trust and the National Institute for Health and Care Research (UK).

Who is the main contact?
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Contact information

Type(s)
Scientific

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Additional identifiers

Study information

Scientific Title
Assessing the effect of informative photo referral cards on access to eye care services within a community-based program in Kwale county: a randomized controlled trial

Study objectives
Primary objective: To assess whether informative photo referral cards improve attendance rates among left-behind groups (18-34 year-olds) compared with the standard of care in the Vision Impact Project screening programme in Kwale County
Secondary objective: To assess whether informative photo referral cards improve attendance for individuals over 35 years old. compared with the standard of care in the Vision Impact Project screening programme in Kwale County.

Ethics approval required
Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)
1. approved 25/08/2025, KEMRI Scientific and Ethics Review Unit (SERU) (Off Raila Odinga road, Nairobi, 54840-00200, Kenya; +254 717 719 477; seru@kemri.go.ke), ref: SERU 5200

2. approved 08/09/2025, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) ethics (Keppel Street, London, WC1E 7HT, United Kingdom; +44 (0)20 7927 2221; ethics@lshtm.ac.uk), ref: 29549 5

Study design
Randomized controlled trial

Primary study design
Interventional

Study type(s)
Treatment

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Eye problems identified by community-based screeners using the Peek Vision screening app.

Interventions

Randomisation process:
We will use computer-generated random numbers to determine the allocation sequence, ensuring that all consented and referred participants are evenly distributed across the intervention groups. A simple algorithm integrated into the Peek app will perform this function when the screener indicates in the Peek Capture app that a patient requires a referral.
When the random allocation algorithm within the Peek app assigns a patient to the intervention arm, the Peek app will display a notice to the screener that reads, 'Photo', indicating that the screener should take a photo of the participant, print it, and attach it to the referral card, then provide the informative photo referral card to the participant. The control arm will not receive the card. Both groups will receive the usual counselling at the point of referral, along with SMS reminders on the day of the referral, the day before the appointment, and on the day of the appointment.

1. Intervention arm: Participants will receive an informative photo referral card at the point of referral. The intervention was developed based on feedback from individuals who were referred to an outreach treatment clinic but were unable to attend. During interviews with 41 non-attenders from a left-behind group, 19 different suggestions for modifying services were identified. We then asked 399 additional non-attenders from the same group to rate these suggestions on a three-point Likert scale, indicating how likely each suggestion was to make a difference, ranging from "likely to make a large difference" to "likely to make a small/no difference." The top-ranked suggestions were discussed in a workshop that included representatives from the Kwale Eye Center, Christian Blind Mission, the county health management team, the community advisory board, and the Ministry of Health ophthalmic services unit. This group unanimously agreed to implement and test the informative photo referral card intervention.

This card contains essential information, including the participant's details, appointment date, the importance of attending the clinic, available services, associated costs, and the clinic's opening hours. Additionally, it features a photo of the participant, which is taken using a project smartphone. The image is printed using a wireless mobile photo printer connected to the smartphone via Bluetooth and is attached to the referral card. Once printed, the photo is deleted from the device to ensure privacy.

2. Control arm: Participants will receive usual care, which involves counselling at the point of referral and SMS reminders.

Total duration:
Single exposure (informative photo referral card) at the point of referral.

Follow-up duration:
Depends on the appointment date (xx days post-referral for all arms, measuring clinic attendance)

When a participant is referred, it is recorded within the Peek app and stored in the central database (which holds records of each participant's eye care needs and sociodemographic characteristics) alongside their ophthalmic outreach clinic appointment date and the trial arm to which they have been allocated.

When referred participants check in at ophthalmic outreach clinics, administrative staff record their attendance status in the Peek app, which automatically updates a central database. Once a participant's clinic appointment date has passed, their outcome status is set to indicate whether they attended.

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)
1. The proportion of adults aged 18-34 who are referred to an ophthalmic outreach clinic and attend the ophthalmic outreach clinic on their appointed date measured using study data collected from the Peek app at one time point

Key secondary outcome(s))
1. The proportion of adults aged 35 years and above who are referred to an ophthalmic outreach clinic and who attend the clinic on their appointed date measured using study data collected from the Peek app at one time point

Completion date
30/03/2026

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
1. 18 years or older
2. Willing to participate in the trial

Participant type(s)
Patient, Service user

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Mixed

Lower age limit
18 years

Upper age limit
99 years

Sex
All

Total final enrolment
0

Key exclusion criteria
1. Lack of intention to stay in the study area for at least one month

Date of first enrolment
16/09/2025

Date of final enrolment
31/12/2025

Locations

Countries of recruitment
Kenya

Study participating centre
Kenya Medical Research Institute
Off Raila Odinga Way
Nairobi
Kenya
P.O. Box 54840 00200

Study participating centre
Kwale Eye Centre
Magandia, (800m off the main road/10km South of Likoni Ferry / 20km North of Ukunda)
Kwale
Kenya
P.O. BOX 901 - 80100

Sponsor information

Organisation
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

ROR
https://ror.org/00a0jsq62

Funder(s)

Funder type
Not defined

Funder Name
Wellcome Trust

Alternative Name(s)
Wellcome, WT

Funding Body Type
Private sector organisation

Funding Body Subtype
Trusts, charities, foundations (both public and private)

Location
United Kingdom

Funder Name
National Institute for Health and Care Research

Alternative Name(s)
Wellcome, WT

Funding Body Type
Private sector organisation

Funding Body Subtype
Trusts, charities, foundations (both public and private)

Location
United Kingdom

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan
The data set generated in this study will be stored in non-publicly available repository. Summary data will be published in a journal article. Further anonymous data will be available upon request from Sarah Karanja at Skaranja@kemri.go.ke

IPD sharing plan summary
Available on request, Stored in non-publicly available repository

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Participant information sheet	version 3.0	05/08/2025	09/12/2025	No	Yes
Protocol file	version 3.0	05/08/2025	09/12/2025	No	No