

A London HPV self-sampling pilot

Submission date 19/06/2018	Recruitment status No longer recruiting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Protocol
Registration date 25/07/2018	Overall study status Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results
Last Edited 04/09/2025	Condition category Cancer	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

Underscreened women are at the highest risk of developing cervical cancer, yet the number of women attending cervical screening continues to fall. A potential solution is to offer self-sampling for human papillomavirus (HPV) testing. Self-sampling addresses many of the barriers to conventional screening (cervical cytology): women can take their own sample, in private and at a time and place of their choosing. Self-sampling is slightly less accurate than HPV testing on clinician-taken samples, so would not be suitable as a primary screening test. UK studies have already shown that HPV self-sampling can increase screening uptake in non-attenders but the best approach for offering self-sampling kits (SSK) is unclear. London has consistently has the lowest cervical screening uptake nationally, making it an ideal population to assess the potential for self-sampling and provide evidence for its use in England. The aim of this study is to establish the best design for a large study of self-sampling.

Who can participate?

Women aged 25-64 who are eligible for cervical screening and are at least 6 months overdue (i.e. no cervical screening recorded in the GP records in the past 3.5 years if aged 25-49 or 5.5 years if aged 50-64)

What does the study involve?

Participating GP practices are randomly allocated to either offer self-sampling opportunistically when eligible women consult for any reason, or to provide usual care. In both groups women who have never been screened or are overdue are randomly allocated either to usual care, to receive a letter inviting them to order a self-sampling kit, or to receive a self-sampling kit in the post. Uptake of self-sampling is assessed for each approach. Cervical screening data for all eligible women is collected from GP records for 12 months after recruitment ends to assess changes in screening coverage.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

Some women find it difficult to make an appointment for cervical screening because they are busy or because their GP practice is busy. Some women may find it uncomfortable or embarrassing to have a test taken by a doctor or nurse. Participants will be able to take a test for cervical screening themselves without having to be examined or to make an appointment. In other studies, some women who had not been for routine cervical screening and took a self-test were found to have abnormal cervical cells and were successfully treated. Women who have

taken self-tests in previous studies have not reported any particular problems. Feedback from women is that they found the test easy and convenient to do.

Where is the study run from?

1. Thornbury Road Centre for Health (UK)
2. Albany Practice (UK)
3. Argyle Health - Isleworth Practice (UK)
4. The Practice Heart Of Hounslow (UK)
5. Chiswick Health Centre (UK)
6. Grove Park Surgery (UK)
7. Grove Park Terrace Surgery (UK)
8. Wellesley Road Practice (UK)
9. The Medical Centre - Twickenham Park Medical Surgery (UK)
10. Gill Medical Practice (UK)
11. Crosslands Surgery (UK)
12. Firstcare Practice (UK)
13. Hounslow Family Practice (UK)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
November 2017 to November 2021

Who is funding the study?
Cancer Research UK

Who is the main contact?
Dr Anita Lim
anita.lim@kcl.ac.uk

Contact information

Type(s)
Scientific

Contact name
Dr Anita Lim

ORCID ID
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4407-7451>

Contact details
Rm GH0603334
Research Oncology
3rd Floor
Bermondsey Wing
Guy's Hospital
Great Maze Pond
London
United Kingdom
SE1 9RT
+44 (0)2078485494
anita.lim@kcl.ac.uk

Additional identifiers

Clinical Trials Information System (CTIS)

Nil known

Integrated Research Application System (IRAS)

205691

ClinicalTrials.gov (NCT)

Nil known

Protocol serial number

CPMS 36156

Study information

Scientific Title

Self-sampling for HPV testing in cervical screening nonattenders in London

Acronym

ALOHA

Study objectives

Underscreened women are at the highest risk of developing cervical cancer, yet the number of women attending cervical screening continues to fall. A potential solution is to offer self-sampling for HPV (human papillomavirus) testing. Self-sampling addresses many of the barriers to conventional screening (cervical cytology): women can take their own sample, in private and at a time and place of their choosing. Self-sampling is slightly less accurate than HPV testing on clinician-taken samples, so would not be suitable as a primary screening test. UK studies have already shown that HPV self-sampling can increase screening uptake in non-attenders but the optimal approach for offering self-sampling kits (SSK) is unclear. London has consistently has the lowest cervical screening uptake nationally making it an ideal population to assess the potential for self-sampling and provide the evidence-base for its implementation in England. This will be a randomised-controlled pilot to establish the optimal study design for a large implementation trial of self-sampling.

Ethics approval required

Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)

London – Brighton & Sussex Research Ethics Committee, 27/11/2017, ref: 17/LO/1655

Study design

Randomised; Both; Design type: Screening, Other, Cohort study

Primary study design

Interventional

Study type(s)

Screening

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Cervical cancer

Interventions

This will be a randomised controlled pilot study at ~12 GP practices in London within the Hounslow Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). Each GP practice will recruit over a period of 12 months and will be randomised 1:1 to:

1. An intervention arm - offering self-sampling kits (SSK) opportunistically to women who are overdue cervical screening by at least 6 months, when they consult for any reason, or
2. A control arm – usual care

Within both arms, women will also be individually randomised. Women who have not been screened (by cytology or self-sampling) ever or by the 15 month or 27 month anniversary of the date their last test was due will be randomised 2:1:1 to:

Group A – usual care (control)

Group B – Receiving a letter inviting them to order a SSK

Group C – Receiving a SSK in the post

STUDY PROCEDURES

1. Opportunistic offering of self-sampling

Eligible women will be automatically flagged during consultation using the electronic patient record software. GPs, nurses and healthcare practitioners will:

- confirm eligibility
- briefly explain the study
- provide a SSK to those willing to take part
- document which women are offered, accept and decline SSK in the electronic patient records

Women will collect their self-sample in the GP surgery bathroom or at home. Samples will be sent to a commercial laboratory (The Doctor's Laboratory (TDL)) for analysis. Women who take their sample at the GP practice will hand it to a member of staff who will send it to the lab via the post (daily) using postage paid envelopes. Samples taken by women at home will be posted to the lab (postage paid envelope).

2. Women who have never been screened or reach the 15 or 27 month anniversary of their last test due date

Women will be identified using the GP electronic patient records and randomised by the GP practice. Women randomised to Group B or C will receive and return SSKs in the post.

Women randomised to receive a letter inviting them to order a SSK will have several options for ordering kits: online, via post and possibly text message.

HPV TEST RESULTS REPORTING

HPV test results from kits sent to or ordered by women will be sent by the lab to the women and copied to their GP.

CLINICAL MANAGEMENT

Women who test HPV negative will not be required to do anything further for the study. Women who test HPV positive will be advised to have a routine clinician-taken cervical screening test at their GP practice. They will be managed according to their cytology results under the NHS cervical screening programme.

DATA COLLECTION

We will collect details of the participant's cervical screening results from their GP medical records. We will also collect anonymous aggregate data on cervical screening for all eligible women (including those who do not return a self-sample) from the national screening database in order to calculate coverage.

RESIDUAL SAMPLES

Residual samples will be anonymised by the laboratory and sent to researchers at Queen Mary University for possible future analysis.

Intervention Type

Other

Primary outcome(s)

This is a pilot study therefore there is no formal primary outcome measure. The study will calculate measures of feasibility and acceptability such as the proportion of eligible women who are offered kits, accept and return a self-sample following each intervention (i.e. (i) opportunistic offer of self-sampling kits, (ii) women invited to order a self-sampling kit, and (iii) women sent self sampling kit) at 6 months and 12 months after the invitation/offer of self sampling

Key secondary outcome(s)

1. The proportion of eligible women who test HPV positive and a) attend for follow up (cytology or colposcopy) within 6 months of testing HPV positive on a SS and b) who are treated for CIN2+
2. "Coverage" of cervical screening following different interventions – when additionally counting an HPV negative test on self-sample as "screened"
3. Use of website in the intervention arm (women invited to order a kit)

Completion date

24/11/2021

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

1. Women aged 25-64 years
2. Eligible for cervical screening
3. At least 6 months overdue (i.e. no cervical screening recorded in the GP records in the past 3.5 years if aged 25-49 or 5.5 years if aged 50-64)

Participant type(s)

Patient

Healthy volunteers allowed

No

Age group

Adult

Sex

All

Total final enrolment

12657

Key exclusion criteria

Women unable to provide informed consent

Date of first enrolment

09/04/2019

Date of final enrolment

31/03/2020

Locations**Countries of recruitment**

United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre**Thornbury Road Centre for Health**

Thornbury Road

Isleworth

United Kingdom

TW7 4HQ

Study participating centre**Albany Practice**

Boston Manor Road

Brentford Health Centre

Brentford

United Kingdom

TW8 8DS

Study participating centre**Argyle Health - Isleworth Practice**

146 Twickenham Road

Isleworth

United Kingdom

TW7 7DJ

Study participating centre

The Practice Heart Of Hounslow

92 Bath Road
Hounslow
United Kingdom
TW3 3LN

Study participating centre

Chiswick Health Centre

Fisher's Lane
London
United Kingdom
W4 1RX

Study participating centre

Grove Park Surgery

95 Burlington Lane
Chiswick
London
United Kingdom
W4 3ET

Study participating centre

Grove Park Terrace Surgery

25 Grove Park Terrace
Chiswick
United Kingdom
W4 3JL

Study participating centre

Wellesley Road Practice

7 Wellesley Road
Chiswick
London
United Kingdom
W4 4BJ

Study participating centre

The Medical Centre - Twickenham Park Medical Surgery

192 Twickenham Road
Twickenham
Feltham

United Kingdom
TW13 6HD

Study participating centre

Gill Medical Practice

32 Harlington Road East
Feltham
United Kingdom
TW14 0AB

Study participating centre

Crosslands Surgery

1 Crosslands Avenue
Southall
United Kingdom
UB2 5QY

Study participating centre

Firstcare Practice

Blenheim Centre
Prince Regent Road
Hounslow
United Kingdom
TW3 1NL

Study participating centre

Hounslow Family Practice

77 Lampton Road
Hounslow
United Kingdom
TW3 4JX

Sponsor information

Organisation

Queen Mary University of London

ROR

<https://ror.org/026zzn846>

Funder(s)

Funder type

Charity

Funder Name

Cancer Research UK; Grant Codes: C8162/A16892

Alternative Name(s)

CR_UK, Cancer Research UK - London, Cancer Research UK (CRUK), CRUK

Funding Body Type

Private sector organisation

Funding Body Subtype

Other non-profit organizations

Location

United Kingdom

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

The data sharing plans for the current study are unknown and will be made available at a later date.

IPD sharing plan summary

Data sharing statement to be made available at a later date

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Results article	Participant information sheet	28/07/2025	04/09/2025	Yes	No
HRA research summary			28/06/2023	No	No
Participant information sheet		11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes
Protocol file	version 9.0	12/10/2021	15/08/2022	No	No