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EXPERT: EXPerience of a health website Evaluated in a Research Study

Submission date 17/05/2013	**Recruitment status** No longer recruiting	[X] Prospectively registered [_] Protocol
Registration date 17/05/2013	**Overall study status** Completed	[_] Statistical analysis plan [X] Results
Last Edited 14/11/2016	**Condition category** Other	[_] Individual participant data

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
The internet has seen an explosion of websites featuring people's accounts of their experiences of health and illness, for example through blogs, patients forums, online ratings sites and voluntary organisation websites. These are popular, but may cause harm as well as benefits. The aim of this study is to find out whether or not people find health information websites useful and if so, how best to provide health information online. Information from health websites may help people make better healthcare choices, alert them to health issues and improve their understanding. By conducting this study we hope to learn more about how people use health information websites, whether information is more useful if it is presented in a particular way, and if people have a preference as to how health information is provided online.

Who can participate?
For this study we want to recruit people who are in one of three categories:
1. People with asthma
2. People who smoke but are thinking of quitting
3. People who are carers of someone who has multiple sclerosis.
If one of these categories applies to you then you may be eligible to take part. If you are over 18, have an email address, access to an internet connection and are willing to answer some questions online, we would like to hear from you.

What does the study involve?
Participants are asked to look at a health information website. Before viewing the website we ask them to complete some questionnaires about their health and their attitude to health information on the internet. These questions should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. Once they have answered these questions they are able to create a username and a password and are given access to a health information website. They have two weeks to access the website during which time we would like them to visit the website as many times as they wish and look at whatever information is of particular interest. They can select 'Comment on page' to tell us what they think about the website or leave any comments about the study; they can also rate individual web pages. After two weeks we ask them to answer some further questions about their health and also their views on the website they looked at. These questions should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. When they are using the health information website

we will monitor which particular pages they view. We will also look at whether they use the search facility to find information and what search words they enter. We also invite some (but not all) participants for an interview. This interview is conducted in person by someone visiting their home, or another suitable location. The interview is entirely voluntary.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
We cannot guarantee that participants will personally benefit from this study but you will be contributing to important research. We do not foresee any major risks to taking part in this study but if any of the information you come across on the website causes you concern about your health (or the health of someone you care for) please contact your GP or call NHS Direct. The information you provide via the online questionnaires and website visits will be analysed anonymously.

Where is the study run from?
University of Oxford (UK).

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
June 2013 to May 2014.

Who is funding the study?
National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) (UK).

Who is the main contact?
Prof. John Powell
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Contact information

Type(s)
Scientific

Contact name
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Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number
14521

Study information

Scientific Title
EXPerience of a health website Evaluated in a Research Study: An exploratory study to assess feasibility, and measure the impact of online health information (experiential and fact-based) for self-management of asthma, motivation to stop smoking and preparedness for caring for someone with multiple sclerosis

Acronym
EXPERT

Study objectives
EXPERT is a randomised, controlled trial in which we are comparing the effects of online interventions (websites) offered to people with one of three conditions (people with asthma; people who smoke but want to quit; and carers of people with Multiple Sclerosis). We are studying whether information from different sources can help self-management of illness; help achieve health behaviour change and help people feel more supported in their caring role.

Ethics approval required
Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)
First MREC approval date 27/02/2013, ref: 0162

Study design
Interventional randomised controlled trial; Design type: feasibility

Primary study design
Interventional

Study type(s)
Treatment

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Smoking cessation, management of chronic asthma, caring for a person with multiple sclerosis

Interventions
All eligible participants are sent a patient information sheet and asked to provide baseline measures prior to their website allocation. Once the participant submitted their questionnaire responses (baseline data) by clicking ‘finish’ they were randomised into the study and allocated to a website. Randomisation was carried out by stratified (on the three conditions) block randomisation with varying block sizes. Participants were randomised in a 1:1 ratio to either the intervention or comparator websites in each of the three study conditions. A randomisation list was generated and uploaded to the web-based system to ensure treatment concealment. The investigators were not aware of the randomisation result on the system. The randomisation list, which was password protected, was kept in confidence. Participants create a unique user ID and password which allows unlimited website access for two weeks. Participants’ website use is

tracked in full. After two weeks, participants will be asked to provide follow up measures and website access will be removed. A selection of participants will be invited for interview after completion of the study.

Intervention Type
Other

Phase
Not Applicable

Primary outcome(s)
To evaluate the feasibility issues in an online randomised study providing health information websites containing patient experience information compared with matched health information websites that do not contain experiential information.

Key secondary outcome(s))
1. To assess the efficacy of two types of online health information (patient experience accounts compared with matched health information websites that do not contain experiential information) on a range of self-reported outcomes
2. To explore whether the interventions have differential effects on pre-specified subgroups of participants
3. To measure the impact of the intervention and comparator websites using the eHealth Impact Questionnaire (eHIQ)

Completion date
31/05/2014

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
Smokers:
1. People who are current smokers, who have been smokers for at least a year, and who indicate some willingness to quit, including those referred to smoking cessation services
2. Male or female aged 18 or over
3. Willing and able to give informed consent for participation in the study
4. Live in England
5. Have access to the internet and able to use websites

People with asthma:
1. People who have been clinically diagnosed with asthma as coded in their primary care electronic record, and who have been prescribed inhaled corticosteroids for at least 3 months in the previous year
2. Male or female aged 18 or over
3. Willing and able to give informed consent for participation in the study
4. Live in England
5. Have access to the internet and able to use websites

Carers of people with multiple sclerosis:
1. People who identify themselves as a caregiver for another person who has a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis
2. Male or female aged 18 or over

3. Willing and able to give informed consent for participation in the study
4. Live in England
5. Have access to the internet and able to use websites

Participant type(s)
Mixed

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Adult

Lower age limit
18 years

Sex
All

Key exclusion criteria
Smokers:
1. People who are terminally ill
2. People who cannot understand English
3. People who have previously entered the study
4. People who have another significant disease or disorder which, in the opinion of the GP, may either put that person at risk because of participation in the study, or may influence the result of the study, or affect that person's ability to participate in the study

People with asthma:
1. People who are terminally ill
2. People who cannot understand English
3. People who have previously entered the study
4. People who have another significant disease or disorder which, in the opinion of the GP, may either put that person at risk because of participation in the study, or may influence the result of the study, or affect that person's ability to participate in the study

Carers of people with multiple sclerosis:
1. People who are terminally ill
2. People who cannot understand English
3. People who have previously entered the study
4. People who have a significant disease or disorder which, in the opinion of the Principal Investigator, may either put that person at risk because of participation in the study, or may influence the result of the study, or affect that person's ability to participate in the study
5. People whose only caring role is in a professional (paid) capacity

Date of first enrolment
14/06/2013

Date of final enrolment
31/08/2014

Locations

Countries of recruitment
United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre
Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences
University of Oxford
Gibson Building 1st Floor
Radcliffe Observatory Quarter
Woodstock Road
Oxford
United Kingdom
OX2 6GG

Sponsor information

Organisation
University of Oxford (UK)

ROR
https://ror.org/052gg0110

Funder(s)

Funder type
Government

Funder Name
National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) (UK)

Alternative Name(s)
National Institute for Health Research, NIHR Research, NIHRresearch, NIHR - National Institute for Health Research, NIHR (The National Institute for Health and Care Research), NIHR

Funding Body Type
Government organisation

Funding Body Subtype
National government

Location
United Kingdom

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

IPD sharing plan summary
Available on request

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Results article	results	11/11/2016		Yes	No
Participant information sheet	Participant information sheet	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes