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Can internet-based sexual health services increase diagnoses of sexually transmitted infections (STIs)? Evaluation of an internet-based sexual health service

Submission date
11/11/2014

Recruitment status
No longer recruiting

Registration date
21/11/2014

Overall study status
Completed

Last Edited
15/01/2018

Condition category
Infections and Infestations

[X] Prospectively registered

[X] Protocol

[_] Statistical analysis plan

[X] Results

[_] Individual participant data

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
The London boroughs of Southwark and Lambeth have some of the highest rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in England. Current face-to-face clinical services are unable to meet demand for sexual healthcare. Sexual Health 24 (SH:24) is an innovative internet-based sexual health service that aims to improve access to sexual healthcare in Lambeth and Southwark. We want to see whether this service can reduce the number of people diagnosed with at least one STI and increase the number of people asking to be tested for such an infection.

Who can participate?
Participants can be of either sex, aged between 16-30 and resident in the boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark. They must be sexually active (at least one partner in the last 12 months), have access to the internet and willing to take an STI test.

What does the study involve?
Participants are randomly allocated to one of two groups. Those in group 1 (intervention group) are given access to the Sexual Health 24 website offering postal STI kits, test results via text message or by phone (HIV only) and details of local treatment clinics. Those in group 2 (control group) are given access to a website with details of local sexual health clinics where participants can get an STI test in person. Six weeks into the study, the number of participants diagnosed with at least one STI and complete at least one STI test in each group are compared.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
Some participants may find this study helpful, particularly if they have been considering taking an STI test. Undetected cases will be diagnosed by those who follow through with the test, and infected participants will be signposted to treatment. It is possible that participants that do not have much privacy at home may risk possible consequences if they participate in internet-based STI testing. However, this risk will be minimised as we will ensure at recruitment that participants have sufficient privacy to participate in the study.

Where is the study run from?
1. King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (UK)
2. Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (UK)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
November 2014 to July 2015

Who is funding the study?
Guys and St Thomas' Charity (UK)

Who is the main contact?
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Contact information

Type(s)
Scientific

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Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number
v6

Study information

Scientific Title
Can internet-based sexual health services increase diagnoses of sexually transmitted infections (STIs)? Evaluation of an internet-based sexual health service

Acronym
N/A

Study objectives

Internet-based sexual health services offering postal self-administered STI kits can increase diagnoses of sexually transmitted infections when compared to standard care.

Ethics approval required
Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)
NRES Committee London - Camberwell and St Giles, 09/09/2014, ref: 14/LO/1477

Primary study design
Interventional

Study design
Interventional study

Study type(s)
Treatment

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Sexual health

Interventions
An internet-based sexual health service (intervention) versus standard face-to-face sexual health services (control)

Intervention Type
Other

Primary outcome(s)
At 6 weeks we will assess:
1. % of participants diagnosed with at least one STI in each arm
2. % of participants who complete at least one STI test in each arm

Key secondary outcome(s)
At 6 weeks we will assess:
1. % of participants prescribed treatment in each arm
2. Time to test (from randomisation)
3. Time to treatment (from randomisation)
4. % of intervention group who agree that internet-based testing is acceptable
5. % of intervention group adhere to prescribed internet-testing pathway

Completion date
31/01/2017

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
1. Aged 16-30
2. Resident in the London boroughs of Southwark and Lambeth
3. Sexually active (at least 1 sexual partner in last 12 months)

4. Access to the internet (smart phone, PC or laptop)
5. Willing to take an STI test

Participant type(s)
Patient

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Adult

Sex
All

Key exclusion criteria
1. Non-English language speakers as the websites will be in English
2. Those unable to give informed consent such as people with severe learning disabilities

Date of first enrolment
22/11/2014

Date of final enrolment
31/08/2015

Locations

Countries of recruitment
United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre
Weston Education Centre
10 Cutcombe Road
London
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Sponsor information

Organisation
Kings College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (UK)

ROR

https://ror.org/01n0k5m85

Funder(s)

Funder type
Charity

Funder Name
Guy's and St Thomas' Charity

Alternative Name(s)
Guy's and St Thomas' Charity, Guy's and St Thomas' Foundation, GSTTFoundation

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

IPD sharing plan summary
Not provided at time of registration

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Results article	results	27/12/2017		Yes	No
Protocol article	protocol	15/01/2016		Yes	No
Protocol article	addendum to protocol	10/08/2016		Yes	No
HRA research summary			28/06/2023	No	No
Participant information sheet	Participant information sheet	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes
Study website	Study website	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes