

# Supporting Women with adherence to hormone Therapy following breast cancer (SWEET): the feasibility study

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<b>Registration date</b> 12/08/2022	<b>Overall study status</b> Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results
<b>Last Edited</b> 05/03/2026	<b>Condition category</b> Cancer	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data

## Plain English summary of protocol

<https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/find-a-clinical-trial/a-study-to-support-women-to-take-their-hormone-therapy-following-breast-cancer-sweet>

### Background and study aims

In 2016, 11,563 women died from breast cancer in the UK. Most would have been prescribed hormone therapy (HT); sometimes known as endocrine therapy, which blocks the effect of oestrogen on breast cancer cells. HT is prescribed as a daily tablet, usually for at least five years and often up to 10 years. When women stop taking HT prematurely or don't take it as prescribed (known as "poor adherence"), they have up to a three times higher chance of cancer returning and dying from cancer. At least 20% of women have poor adherence after two years and around 50% by five years. Our previous research has identified reasons for poor adherence, including feeling negative or concerned about HT, not fully understanding its importance, side effects, feeling unsupported, and forgetfulness. SWEET is an NIHR-funded research programme, which is supported by a Patient Advisory Group and Clinical Reference Group, which will develop and test a support package to support women taking ET as recommended. The feasibility study will run at up to five NHS clinical sites and use mixed methods to inform the potential for a larger randomised controlled trial (RCT), answering the following key questions:

1. Can we identify and recruit potentially eligible patients?
2. Is it feasible to deliver the initial face-to-face intervention consultation within 8 weeks of recruitment?
3. Are the baseline and follow-up questionnaires acceptable?
4. Do women find the different components of the intervention acceptable and useful?
5. What is the timeliness and quality of primary care prescription encashment data, and is it possible to use this to compute an objective measure of adherence to adjuvant endocrine therapy (AET)?

### Who can participate?

Sub-study 1: Women recently diagnosed with early-stage ER-positive invasive breast cancer and prescribed oral AET (in the past 3 months), who have a medium or high risk of recurrence.

Sub-study 2: Women diagnosed with early-stage ER-positive invasive breast cancer and prescribed oral AET in the previous 9-36 months.

What does the study involve?

Sub-study 1: Participants will receive the intervention (HT&Me support package) and will be followed for 7-9 weeks. As part of the HT&Me support package, participants will be offered an initial appointment with a study nurse who will ask women about their experiences of hormone therapy so far and will show them the HT&Me website and how it works. Some consultations may be recorded so that the research team can review how they went. Participants will also have access to a follow-up consultation to check how they are getting on with their hormone therapy and ask about their experiences with the website. Participants will then be asked to complete a follow-up questionnaire, and a sub-sample will undergo interviews. Interviews will also be conducted with a sample of health professionals involved in the study.

Sub-study 2: The AET prescribing history for each individual recruited woman will be obtained through linkage of the cohort to the National Cancer Registration Database (NCRD) and the NHS Business Services Authority (BSA) Primary Care Prescribing Database (PCPD). This will provide information on timeliness and completeness. If this information cannot be collected via NHS digital we will seek to obtain this information through GP records.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

Participants may find taking part in this research helpful as you will be provided with additional information and support in relation to taking hormone therapy. Participants will also be contributing to research which could help women with breast cancer who are taking hormone therapy in the future. As a thank you to women that take part in additional interviews at the end of the study, we will be offering a £30 high street voucher.

Participating in qualitative research and completing questionnaires may have emotional consequences for the participant and may involve them considering and discussing potentially upsetting issues related to their own experiences. Participants do not have to answer any questions they do not feel comfortable answering and they can take a break during consultations or interviews if they wish.

Where is the study run from?

Newcastle NHS Foundation Trust, Imperial College Healthcare Trust, Oxford University Hospitals, (with the potential addition of Great Western Hospital) (United Kingdom)

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

March 2022 to November 2023

Who is funding the study?

National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Programme Grant for Applied Research (PGFAR) (United Kingdom)

Who is the main contact?

SWEETStudy@ncl.ac.uk (United Kingdom)

## Contact information

Type(s)

Principal investigator

**Contact name**

Prof Linda Sharp

**Contact details**

Professor of Cancer Epidemiology/Honorary Research Contract (NuTH)  
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**Type(s)**

Principal investigator

**Contact name**

Prof Eila Watson

**Contact details**

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## **Additional identifiers**

**Clinical Trials Information System (CTIS)**

Nil known

**Integrated Research Application System (IRAS)**

307011

**Protocol serial number**

CPMS 52782, IRAS 307011

## **Study information**

**Scientific Title**

Improving outcomes for women diagnosed with early breast cancer through adherence to adjuvant endocrine therapy: the feasibility study

**Acronym**

SWEET

## **Study objectives**

The provision of a tailored support package for women with breast cancer (at moderate or high risk of recurrence) is feasible and acceptable

## **Ethics approval required**

Old ethics approval format

## **Ethics approval(s)**

Approved 18/05/2022, South Central – Hampshire A - Health Research Authority (2 Redman Place, Stratford, London, E20 1JQ, United Kingdom; +44 (0)207 104 8196; hampshirea.rec@hra.nhs.uk), ref: 22/SC/0150

## **Study design**

Non-randomized single-arm interventional study

## **Primary study design**

Interventional

## **Study type(s)**

Treatment

## **Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied**

Breast Cancer

## **Interventions**

Sub-study 1 is a single-arm, non-randomised feasibility study to explore the acceptability and feasibility of delivering the SWEET intervention (HT&Me support package). Recruited women (n=45) will receive the intervention and will be followed for 7-9 weeks, at which point they will complete a follow-up questionnaire, and a sub-sample will undergo interviews. Interviews will also be conducted with a sample of health professionals involved in the study (n=15-18).

Sub-study 2 is a retrospective cohort study which will test the processes for obtaining prescription encashment data for a small cohort of women (n=45) with breast cancer initially prescribed adjuvant endocrine therapy (AET) at the hospital (thereby testing, on a small scale, the processes that will require to be followed in the subsequent RCT). The AET prescribing history for each individual recruited woman will be obtained through linkage of the cohort to the National Cancer Registration Database (NCRD) and the NHS Business Services Authority (BSA) Primary Care Prescribing Database (PCPD). This will provide information on timeliness and completeness.

## **Intervention Type**

Other

## **Primary outcome(s)**

Sub-study 1:

1. Optimal patient recruitment pathways measured using patient and health care provider (HCP) interviews at around 8-9 weeks post initial consultation and by review of patient screening logs recorded at time of assessment of eligibility
2. Feasibility of recruiting women to receive the intervention measured using patient and HCP interviews at around 8-9 weeks post initial consultation and by review of:
  - 2.1. Patient screening logs recorded at the time of assessment of eligibility

- 2.2. Information recorded on reasons why women declined to take part (decliner log), recorded at the time of recruitment
3. Feasibility of delivering the intervention measured as percentages of recruited women who:
  - 3.1. Received the initial nurse consultation within 8 weeks of recruitment
  - 3.2. Accessed the web app during their time in the study, determined from the questionnaire and analytic data at 8-9 weeks post initial consultation and from HCP interviews at 8-9 weeks post initial consultation
4. Acceptability and usefulness of the HT&Me intervention to patients measured using patient and HCP interviews at around 8-9 weeks post initial consultation
5. Barriers to, and facilitators of, trial implementation, including:
  - 5.1. Willingness of staff to recruit women to a randomised controlled trial (RCT) measured using HCP interviews at around 8-9 weeks post initial consultation
  - 5.2. Willingness of women to be recruited and randomised to an RCT measured using patient interviews and follow-up questionnaire at around 8-9 weeks post initial consultation
6. Test processes for collecting self-reported outcome data measured using patient questionnaires at baseline and at 8 weeks after the initial consultation

#### Sub-study 2:

7. Test processes for obtaining prescription encashment data for a small cohort of women with breast cancer initially prescribed adjuvant endocrine therapy some months previously measured retrospectively using prescription data from NHS digital or GP records, collected prior to the end of a feasibility study (June 2022)

#### **Key secondary outcome(s)**

There are no secondary outcome measures

#### **Completion date**

30/11/2023

## **Eligibility**

#### **Key inclusion criteria**

Sub-study 1 Inclusion criteria:

The following patients will be eligible:

1. Aged 18 years old and over
2. Female
3. Diagnosis of ER-positive invasive breast cancer
4. Medium or high risk of recurrence, defined as one of the following:
  - 4.1. T2 and N0
  - 4.2. T2 and N>0
  - 4.3. T1 and N>0
  - 4.4. T1 and N0 and grade 3
5. Within 3 months of first oral adjuvant endocrine therapy (AET) prescription (tamoxifen or aromatase inhibitor)
6. Completed surgery
7. Completed chemotherapy (if applicable)
8. Can access the internet and have an email address
9. Are willing to use a support package with a web-based component

Sub-study 2 Inclusion criteria:

The following patients will be eligible:

1. Aged 18 years old and over
2. Female
3. Diagnosis of ER-positive invasive breast cancer
4. Medium or high risk of recurrence, defined as one of the following:
  - 4.1. T2 and N0
  - 4.2. T2 and N>0
  - 4.3. T1 and N>0
  - 4.4. T1 and N0 and grade 3
5. Were first prescribed oral AET (tamoxifen or aromatase inhibitor) within the past 9-36 months
6. Have completed surgery
7. Have completed chemotherapy (if applicable)

**Participant type(s)**

Patient

**Healthy volunteers allowed**

No

**Age group**

Mixed

**Lower age limit**

18 years

**Upper age limit**

99 years

**Sex**

Female

**Total final enrolment**

115

**Key exclusion criteria**

Sub-study 1 and 2 exclusion criteria:

The following patients with early-stage ER+ve invasive breast cancer will be ineligible:

1. Male
2. Have been prescribed adjuvant CDK4/6i (abemaciclib)
3. Have cognitive impairment sufficient to preclude participation, as judged by the clinical team
4. Are unable to read and understand English
5. Had previous AET (for another breast cancer)
6. Have not had surgery for breast cancer

**Date of first enrolment**

01/09/2022

**Date of final enrolment**

31/07/2023

**Locations**

**Countries of recruitment**

United Kingdom

England

**Study participating centre****Freeman Hospital**

Freeman Road  
High Heaton  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
England  
NE7 7DN

**Study participating centre****St Marys Hospital**

South Wharf Road  
London  
England  
W2 1BL

**Study participating centre****John Radcliffe Hospital**

Headley Way  
Headington  
Oxford  
England  
OX3 9DU

**Sponsor information****Organisation**

Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

**ROR**

<https://ror.org/05p40t847>

**Funder(s)****Funder type**

Government

## Funder Name

National Institute for Health and Care Research Central Commissioning Facility (CCF); Grant Codes: NIHR200098

## 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

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study will be stored in a publicly available repository (details to be confirmed)

## IPD sharing plan summary

Stored in publicly available repository

## Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
<a href="#">Results article</a>		01/11/2025	22/12/2025	Yes	No
<a href="#">Results article</a>		01/11/2025	19/02/2026	Yes	No
<a href="#">HRA research summary</a>			28/06/2023	No	No
<a href="#">Protocol file</a>	version 3.0	21/07/2022	08/08/2022	No	Yes