

Boosting uptake of NHS Health Checks

Submission date 24/01/2014	Recruitment status No longer recruiting	☐ Prospectively registered ☐ Protocol
Registration date 08/04/2014	Overall study status Completed	☐ Statistical analysis plan ☒ Results
Last Edited 29/05/2020	Condition category Other	☐ Individual participant data

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

The NHS Health Check is offered to 40-74 year olds in England who do not have an excluding medical condition. These 15 million patients are invited over a rolling five-year period i.e. one fifth per year. The programme is a policy priority for the Department of Health, NHS England and Public Health England and local authorities in their efforts to tackle premature mortality and promote healthy lifestyles. However, uptake rates are significantly lower than desired, at around 50 per cent. Local authority commissioners of the NHS Health Check currently use a range of different letters and marketing to invite the eligible population. It is not known which approach works better but making a change to the content of the invitation letter or a reminder text message may help change people's behaviour. The aim of this study is to determine the most effective patient invitation letter to maximise attendance of NHS Health Checks. The study will also consider other invitation or reminder methods, such as SMS messages and will test whether introducing a text message at the invitation stage changes levels of uptake.

Who can participate?

People eligible for an NHS Health Check and resident in the London Borough of Southwark, London (UK).

What does the study involve?

Participants are randomly allocated to receive the standard letter or one of the other letters (15 different combinations, for example with or without testimonials, with or without text reminders, etc).

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

There are no direct benefits. It is anticipated that participants will be more likely to attend their Health Check and therefore to receive any benefits associated with this NHS Health Check. There are no risks to participants. The standard NHS leaflet explaining the risks of attending a Health Check or not is included in both the standard and other letters.

Where is the study run from?

GP practices in the London Borough of Southwark (UK)

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

November 2013 to April 2014

Who is funding the study?
The Department of Health (UK)

Who is the main contact?
Annabelle Bonus

Contact information

Type(s)
Scientific

Contact name
Ms Annabelle Bonus

Contact details
Wellington House, 133-135 Waterloo Road
London
United Kingdom
SE1 8UG

Additional identifiers

Integrated Research Application System (IRAS)
138943

Protocol serial number
IRAS project ID:138943

Study information

Scientific Title
Using behavioural insights to change uptake of the NHS Health Check

Study objectives
Does making small, low-cost changes, based on behavioural insight, to the NHS Health Check invitation process change levels of uptake?

Ethics approval required
Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)
NHS Health Research Authority NRES Committee, 23/09/2013, ref:13/SW/0293

Primary study design
Interventional

Study design
Multicentre factorial randomised controlled trial

Study type(s)

Other

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

NHS Health Checks

Interventions

The main aim of this trial is to investigate whether making small changes to the invitation letter for NHS Health Checks results in a difference in uptake.

The changes to the letters to be trialled include:

1. Control letter (the national template)
2. Short, letter with personalised tear off slip
3. Short, letter with personalised tear off slip and deadline
4. Short letter with social norms and testimonials

The impact of these letters will be tested against a control letter (the national template).

The new text messages to be trialled include:

1. Text message primer: patients receive a text message one week before the invitation letter telling them to expect the letter
2. Text message reminder: patients receive a text message one week after the invitation letter reminding them to respond to their letter.

The impact of these messages will be tested against the control of receiving no message.

This trial is a factorial design made up of three levels, all of which make up the initial invitation to a health check. We propose a 2 (Text primer: yes/no) x4 (Letter: Ctrl/social norms/open /closed) x2 (Text reminder: yes/no) between subjects factorial trial design.

1. Control letter (the national template), Text primer: Yes, Text reminder: Yes
2. Control letter (the national template), Text primer: Yes, Text reminder: No
3. Control letter (the national template), Text primer: No, Text reminder: Yes
4. Control letter (the national template), Text primer: No, Text reminder: No
5. Short letter with social norms and testimonials, Text primer: Yes, text reminder: Yes
6. Short letter with social norms and testimonials, Text primer: Yes, text reminder: No
7. Short letter with social norms and testimonials, Text primer: No, text reminder: Yes
8. Short letter with social norms and testimonials, Text primer: No, text reminder: No
9. Short, letter with personalised tear off slip, Text primer: Yes, text reminder: Yes
10. Short, letter with personalised tear off slip, Text primer: Yes, text reminder: No
11. Short, letter with personalised tear off slip, Text primer: No, text reminder: Yes
12. Short, letter with personalised tear off slip, Text primer: No, text reminder: No
13. Short, letter with personalised tear off slip and deadline, Text primer: Yes, text reminder: Yes
14. Short, letter with personalised tear off slip and deadline, Text primer: Yes, text reminder: No
15. Short, letter with personalised tear off slip and deadline, Text primer: No, text reminder: Yes
16. Short, letter with personalised tear off slip and deadline, Text primer: No, text reminder: No

Intervention Type

Other

Phase

Not Specified

Primary outcome(s)

Attendance at an NHS Health Check. This will be measured against the control group. We will get interim results in March 2014 and the final results in June 2014. This data is captured anyway by the invitation letter provider.

Key secondary outcome(s)

No secondary outcome measures

Completion date

01/05/2014

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

1. Any patient registered at a consenting GP practice in Southwark during the trial duration who is due to be invited for an NHS Health Check
2. Patients aged between 40-74 are invited to attend for a Health Check via an invitation letter sent to the address held in their medical records. Invitation letters and leaflets are sent on 24th of each month to the eligible population (starting on their 40th birthdays, and then every five years after that)

Participant type(s)

Patient

Healthy volunteers allowed

No

Age group

Mixed

Sex

All

Key exclusion criteria

Participants will only be excluded if they are no longer eligible for an NHS Health Check at their GP's surgery, for example, if they have had one at a local pharmacy already

Date of first enrolment

01/11/2013

Date of final enrolment

01/05/2014

Locations

Countries of recruitment

United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre
Department of Health
London
United Kingdom
SE1 8UG

Sponsor information

Organisation
Department of Health (UK)

ROR
<https://ror.org/03sbpja79>

Funder(s)

Funder type
Government

Funder Name
Department of Health (UK)

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	22/08/2019	29/05/2020	Yes	No
HRA research summary			28/06/2023	No	No