Imperial College London

Perspectives of clinicians who recruit to clinical trials in addictions services

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The difficulties of recruiting to trials are widely known, yet the process of recruitment has not been thoroughly documented. Clinicians in clinical services often mediate researcher access to patients, but few studies consider the role that these gatekeepers may have in recruiting participants.

Objectives

- To investigate the process of recruitment from the perspective of clinicians recruiting into the HBV ConMan Trial
- To describe the factors that contributed to successful recruitment of 210 trial participants

ConMan HBV Trial

Evaluated the effectiveness of contingency management (using supermarket voucher incentives) in promoting completion of hepatitis B vaccination amongst opiate drug users - HBV ConMan Trial (Weaver et al 2014)

Study design

Qualitative focus groups

Setting

11 NHS community drug treatment services in England that participated in the HBV ConMan Trial

Participants

Clinician-gatekeepers who were tasked with screening and consenting participants into the HBV ConMan trial

Outcome measures

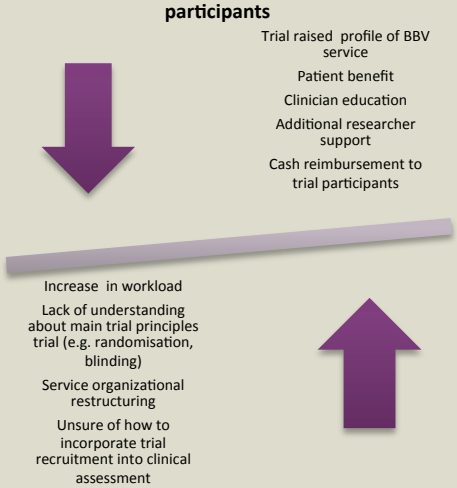
Thematic analysis using NVIVO 10

Results & Conclusions

Key Barriers:

- Several services were undergoing major service restructuring that resulted in substantial budget strains, staff redundancies, pay cuts increase in workload, etc. This affected how clinicians felt about participating in a trial.
- Several expressed an initial concern about taking part in a trial, particularly around how it would impact upon their workload
- Clinicians expressed a desire to have more information about the trial and felt that a thorough understanding of trial design heightened their sense of engagement with the study and thus their willingness to recruit.

Themes identified by clinicians that were barriers or facilitators to recruitment of participants



Key Facilitators:

- Trial presented an educational opportunity for clinicians
- Raised the profile of BBV services
- Clinicians felt that the increase in their workload would be justified if research was beneficial to clients and led them to feel more engaged with and valued by services
- Clinicians felt valued by being part of the research.
- Clinicians felt they benefitted from a strong presence of researchers on site to assist with questions around screening procedures and eligibility criteria.

"I didn't feel as enthused as I perhaps should have done about doing this and maybe that conveys itself, or doesn't convey itself to the clients I saw. And I think if I knew a bit more about it in terms of research at other places or other people's experiences, that I might have done."

"I'm just thinking about when I was presenting it to the clients, I think it did hook them in to waking up to the hepatitis B, but also I think it made us concentrate more on offering or pushing the hepatitis B . . it was certainly highlighted in the assessment much more than I would normally give it weight by having the contingency plan.

Contextual factors surrounding trials influence the willingness and ability of staff to successfully recruit participants. The relationship clinicians have with their services and with the research team influences the recruitment of subjects. These factors should be considered when planning a recruitment strategy for a trial and implementing trial recruitment protocols.

Trial registration: ISRCTN72794493