HEalth Check TRial (HECTR): Comparing uptake of NHS Health Check in response to standard letters, risk-personalised letters and telephone invitation

Background

Uptake of Health Checks remains below the 75% on which economic modelling was based. Our work in Stoke-on-Trent found that:

- Verbal/telephone invitations have significantly higher uptake compared with postal
- Approximately one-third of non-attenders did not recall receiving an invitation letter, with others reporting that it lacked relevant information and/or was not prioritised.

Personalised risk information has the potential to increase uptake of screening.

Aim

Three-arm randomised controlled trial (RCT) in nine practices in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire to test the impact of letters tailored to patient's level of CVD risk on uptake of NHS Health Check, compared with the standard national letter and telephone invitations.

Outcomes

1. Telephone invitations were most effective
   - 1628 out of 4614 (35.3%) patients attended their Health Check
   - Uptake differed by invitation method
     - Standard letter (30.9%):
     - Telephone (47.6%)
     - Risk-personalised letter (31.3%).

   - In multi-level regression (adjusted for practice- and individual-level effects), compared with uptake in the standard letter group
     - Likelihood of attendance increased by 18 percentage points in the telephone group
     - Likelihood of attendance increased by 4 percentage points in the personalised letter group

2. Telephone invitations are worth the additional cost
   - Estimated cost per patient: £1.22 for letters and £1.46 for telephone invitations (based on 2 invitations/patient; use of external mail company for letters).
   - Using % uptake figures:
     - Cost per attended Health Check was £3.95 for standard letters, £3.90 for personalised letters and £3.07 for telephone invitations.
   - Using regression results:
     - Telephone invitations: cost an extra 24p/patient. For every 1000 patients, £240 -> increase the overall attendance by 180 Health Checks
     - Personalised letters: no extra cost. For every 1000 patients - > increase the overall attendance by 40 Health Checks.

Limitations

- Predominantly low risk, young sample
- Test letters that include Heart Age (as we originally intended).