Randomised preference trial of medical versus surgical termination of pregnancy less than 14 weeks’ gestation (TOPS)

SC Robson, T Kelly, D Howel, M Deverill, J Hewison, MLS Lie, E Stamp, N Armstrong and CR May

November 2009
DOI: 10.3310/hta13530
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Declared competing interests of authors: none

Published November 2009
DOI: 10.3310/hta13530

This report should be referenced as follows:


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Abstract

Randomised preference trial of medical versus surgical termination of pregnancy less than 14 weeks’ gestation (TOPS)

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Objectives: To determine the acceptability, efficacy and costs of medical termination of pregnancy (MTOP) compared with surgical termination of pregnancy (STOP) at less than 14 weeks’ gestation, and to understand women’s decision-making processes and experiences when accessing the termination service.

Design: A partially randomised preference trial and economic evaluation with follow-up at 2 weeks and 3 months.

Setting: The Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK.

Participants: Women accepted for termination of pregnancy (TOP) under the relevant Acts of Parliament with pregnancies < 14 weeks’ gestation on the day of abortion. A further group of women attending contraception and sexual health clinics participated in a discrete choice experiment (DCE).

Interventions: STOP: all women ≥6 weeks and < 14 weeks’ gestation were primed with misoprostol 400 µg 2 hours before the procedure. STOP was performed under general anaesthesia using vacuum aspiration. MTOP: all women < 14 weeks’ gestation were given mifepristone 200 mg orally, returning 36–48 hours later for misoprostol.

Outcome measures: Main outcome measure was acceptability of TOP method. Secondary outcome measures included strength of preference by willingness to pay (WTP); distress, using the Impact of Event Scale (IES); anxiety and depression; satisfaction with care; experience of care; frequency and extent of symptoms including self-assessment of pain; clinical effectiveness; and complications. A DCE was used to identify attributes that shape women’s preferences for abortion services.

Results: The trial recruited 1877 women, 349 in the randomised arms and 1528 in the preference arms. Of those in the preference arms, 54% chose MTOP. At 2 weeks after the procedure more women having STOP would choose the same method again in the future. Acceptability of MTOP declined with increasing gestational age. The difference in acceptability between STOP and MTOP persisted at 3 months. At 2 weeks after TOP, women in the preference arms were prepared to pay more to have their preferred option. There was no difference in anxiety or depression scores in women having MTOP or STOP. However, women randomised to MTOP had higher scores on subscales of the IES at both 2 weeks and 3 months. There was no difference in IES scores between MTOP and STOP in the preference arm. Women were more likely to be satisfied overall and with technical and interpersonal aspects of care if they had STOP rather than MTOP. Experience of care scores were lower after MTOP in both randomised and preference arms. During admission women undergoing MTOP had more symptoms and reported higher mean pain scores, and after discharge reported more nausea and diarrhoea. There were no differences in time taken to return to work between groups; around 90% had returned to work and normal activity by 2 weeks. Rates of unplanned or emergency admissions were higher after MTOP than after STOP. Overall complication rates were also higher after MTOP, although this only achieved statistical significance in the preference arm. Overall, STOP cost more than MTOP due to higher inpatient standard costs. Even though complication rates were higher with MTOP it was still more cost-effective. DCE identified three attributes with an almost equal impact on women’s preferences: provision of...
counselling, number of days delay to the procedure, and possibility of an overnight stay.

Conclusions: MTOP was associated with more negative experiences of care and lower acceptability. Acceptability of MTOP declined with increasing gestational age. MTOP was less costly but also less effective than STOP. The majority of women choosing MTOP were satisfied with their care and found the procedure acceptable.

Recommendations for further research:
An audit of provision of MTOP and STOP in England and Wales is urgently required. Further studies exploring the barriers to offering women the choice of method of TOP are needed, together with research on the acceptability and effectiveness of (1) MTOP and manual VA in pregnancies below 9 weeks’ gestation and (2) MTOP and dilatation and evacuation after 14 weeks’ gestation.

Trial registration: Current Controlled Trials ISRCTN07823656.
List of abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANOVA</th>
<th>analysis of variance</th>
<th>NICE</th>
<th>National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence</th>
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<tr>
<td>BNF</td>
<td>British National Formulary</td>
<td>PM</td>
<td>preference medical</td>
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<tr>
<td>CI</td>
<td>confidence interval</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>preference surgical</td>
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<tr>
<td>CoSH</td>
<td>contraception and sexual health</td>
<td>QALY</td>
<td>quality-adjusted life-year</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCE</td>
<td>discrete choice experiment</td>
<td>RCOG</td>
<td>Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPDS</td>
<td>Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scales</td>
<td>RM</td>
<td>randomised medical</td>
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<tr>
<td>GCSE</td>
<td>General Certificate of Secondary Education</td>
<td>RPC</td>
<td>retained products of conception</td>
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<tr>
<td>GP</td>
<td>general practitioner</td>
<td>RS</td>
<td>randomised surgical</td>
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<tr>
<td>HADS</td>
<td>Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale</td>
<td>RVI</td>
<td>Royal Victoria Infirmary</td>
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<tr>
<td>HTA</td>
<td>Health Technology Assessment</td>
<td>SAE</td>
<td>serious adverse event</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICER</td>
<td>incremental cost-effectiveness ratio</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>standard deviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>IES</td>
<td>Impact of Event Scale</td>
<td>STOP</td>
<td>surgical termination of pregnancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRS</td>
<td>marginal rate of substitution</td>
<td>TOP(s)</td>
<td>termination of pregnancy(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MTOP</td>
<td>medical termination of pregnancy</td>
<td>VA</td>
<td>vacuum aspiration</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>VAS</td>
<td>visual analogue scale</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>WTP</td>
<td>willingness to pay</td>
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All abbreviations that have been used in this report are listed here unless the abbreviation is well known (e.g. NHS), or it has been used only once, or it is a non-standard abbreviation used only in figures/tables/appendices, in which case the abbreviation is defined in the figure legend or in the notes at the end of the table.

Note

Gestational ages are reported in weeks + days, e.g. 9+1 indicates 9 weeks and 1 day.
Objectives

To determine the acceptability, efficacy and costs of medical termination of pregnancy (MTOP) compared with surgical termination of pregnancy (STOP) at less than 14 weeks’ gestation, and to understand women’s decision-making processes and experiences when accessing the termination service and taking part in the trial.

Design

A partially randomised preference trial and economic evaluation with follow-up at 2 weeks and 3 months.

Setting

The Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, a large tertiary unit providing both MTOP and STOP up to 20 weeks’ gestation to women throughout the north-east of England. The termination service is nurse practitioner-led and undertakes around 1800 terminations per year.

Participants

Participants were women accepted for termination of pregnancy (TOP) under clause C of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act (1990) amendment of the Abortion Act (1967) with pregnancies less than 14 weeks’ gestation (based on ultrasound) on the day of abortion. A further group of women attending contraception and sexual health clinics in Newcastle upon Tyne participated in a discrete choice experiment.

Interventions

Surgical termination of pregnancy

All women ≥ 6 weeks’ and < 14 weeks’ gestation were primed with misoprostol 400 µg 2 hours prior to the procedure. All STOP procedures were performed under general anaesthesia using vacuum aspiration (VA) by two consultants each on a dedicated operating list.

Medical termination of pregnancy

All women < 14 weeks’ gestation were given mifepristone 200 mg orally. They returned 36–48 hours later to the gynaecological day-case ward for prostaglandins (detailed below).

1. Women ≤ 9 weeks’ gestation were given misoprostol 800 µg vaginally, followed 4 hours later by misoprostol 400 µg if no abortion had occurred. Subsequently if abortion did not occur by 1630–1700 and there was no excessive bleeding, women were discharged home with 2-week follow-up scan review.

2. Women ≥ 9+1 weeks’ gestation were given misoprostol 800 µg vaginally followed by misoprostol 400 µg every 3 hours up to a maximum of four doses. If by midnight no abortion had occurred, mifepristone 200 mg orally was administered followed by gemeprost 1 mg vaginally 3-hourly from 0800 up to a maximum of five doses. If abortion had not occurred by 0800 the following morning, STOP was arranged.

Main outcome measures

The main outcome measure was acceptability determined by responses to the question: ‘If you ever have another termination of pregnancy, would you opt for the same method?’

Secondary outcome measures included strength of preference by willingness to pay (WTP) using the payment card method; distress using the Impact of Event Scale (IES); anxiety and depression using the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS); satisfaction with care using a 5-point Likert scale; experience of care using a semantic differential rating scale; frequency and extent of symptoms including self-assessment of pain using a visual analogue scale; clinical effectiveness using unplanned/emergency admission requiring an overnight stay and complications.

Executive summary
A discrete choice experiment was used to identify key factors (attributes) that shape women’s preferences for abortion services.

**Results**

The trial recruited 1877 women: 349 in the randomised arms and 1528 in the preference arms. Of those in the preference arms, 54% chose MTOP. When questioned 2 weeks after the procedure more women having STOP would choose the same method again in the future (adjusted difference 24.9% [95% confidence interval (CI) 15.8 to 34.9%] in the randomised arm and 15.9% [95% CI 12.2 to 19.6%] in the preference arm). Acceptability of MTOP declined with increasing gestational age. The difference in acceptability between STOP and MTOP persisted at 3 months.

There was no difference in the maximum amount women were willing to pay for their preferred method prior to the procedure. At 2 weeks after TOP, women in the preference arms were prepared to pay more to have their preferred option, but there was no difference in the mean maximum WTP values between MTOP and STOP in the randomised or preference arms.

There were no differences in anxiety or depression between women having MTOP and STOP as measured by HADS. However, women randomised to MTOP had higher scores on the intrusion subscale of the IES at 2 weeks and both the intrusion and avoidance subscales at 3 months. There was no difference in IES scores between the MTOP and STOP groups in the preference arms.

Women were more likely to be satisfied overall and with the technical and interpersonal aspects of care if they had STOP rather than MTOP whether in the preference arms or randomised arms.

Experience of care as determined by median semantic differential scores were lower after MTOP in both randomised and preference groups. MTOP was felt to be more unpleasant, more disagreeable, harder and more painful while STOP was felt to be milder, more agreeable, faster and safer.

During admission women undergoing MTOP had more symptoms and reported higher mean pain scores. Compared with women having STOP, more women having MTOP reported nausea and diarrhoea after discharge. There were no differences in time taken to return to work between groups; around 90% of women had returned to work and normal activity by 2 weeks.

Rates of unplanned or emergency admissions were higher after MTOP than STOP (4.2% versus 0.7% respectively). Overall complication rates were also higher after MTOP (5.0% versus 2.6% respectively), although this difference only achieved statistical significance in the preference arm.

The overall cost of STOP was greater than MTOP (£498 versus £287 respectively) due to higher inpatient standard costs. Even though complication rates were higher with MTOP, the medical procedure was more cost-effective based on the measure of effectiveness used (successful completion of TOP on the day of admission).

A discrete choice experiment identified three service attributes that had an almost equal impact on women’s preferences: the provision of counselling, the number of days delay to the procedure and the possibility of the need for an overnight stay. Women would be prepared to wait approximately one extra day to ensure access to post-termination counselling and to avoid an overnight stay following a termination.

**Qualitative substudy**

Women wanted quick access to abortion, but were concerned about what professionals thought of them. Women also found accessing the service via family planning clinics easier than via general practitioner surgeries. Once in the hospital service, quick assessment and treatment was important to them.

Women participated in the trial because by helping others they were able to feel compensated in some way for the unpleasant experience of undergoing termination. Some felt a general ethical obligation to help while others gained different levels of personal benefit; some women found talking about their experiences cathartic.

Some women found the concept of letting the computer ‘choose’ difficult to understand. For those with a strong pre-existing preference the trial design meant that women could still benefit by both choosing which method they preferred and participate in the trial to help others.
Conclusions

MTOP was associated with more negative experiences of care and lower acceptability. Acceptability of MTOP declined with increasing gestational age. MTOP was less costly, but also less effective than STOP. Women value the option to choose their preferred abortion method. However, the majority of women choosing MTOP were satisfied with their care and found the procedure acceptable, suggesting that a patient-centred abortion service should offer the choice of medical or surgical abortion up to 14 weeks of pregnancy.

Recommendations for further research

An audit of provision of MTOP and STOP in England and Wales is urgently required. Further studies exploring the barriers to offering women the choice of method of TOP are needed, together with research on the acceptability and effectiveness of (1) MTOP and manual VA in pregnancies below 9 weeks’ gestation and (2) MTOP and dilatation and evacuation after 14 weeks’ gestation.

Trial registration

This trial is registered as ISRCTN07823656.
Scientific background

Unwanted pregnancy is a major health issue: worldwide an estimated 53 million abortions are performed each year, resulting in up to 100,000 maternal deaths. In 2007 nearly 200,000 pregnancy terminations were performed in England and Wales, of which 38% were performed in NHS hospitals and 50% in approved independent sector locations under NHS contract. The majority of abortions are performed before 13 weeks of pregnancy (90%) and by surgical methods (65%). In 2000, 64 of 194 (33%) units with facilities for termination of pregnancy (TOP) before 13 weeks provided both medical and surgical methods, while among the 130 units with only one method available, surgical termination of pregnancy (STOP) was the only option in 79%. Prior to 14 weeks' gestation surgical termination can be performed by vacuum aspiration (VA). This procedure, performed under general anaesthesia, has been the method of choice since the 1960s; VA is currently used in 57% of abortions performed prior to 10 weeks' gestation and 89% of those performed at 10–12 weeks' gestation. The technique is safe and efficacious; major complications (uterine perforation, pelvic sepsis and haemorrhage requiring blood transfusion) occur in 0.2–0.9% of cases. However, up to 5% of women return to hospital with post-abortion symptoms, of whom 50–65% require surgical evacuation for retained products. Complication rates increase with gestation, with incomplete abortion reported in up to 12% of cases ≥12 weeks' gestation. Cervical preparation with prostaglandins facilitates cervical dilatation and reduces complications. If the woman is under 18 years of age or at > 10 weeks' gestation, misoprostol 400 µg vaginally 3 hours prior to surgery is recommended.

Medical abortion using mifepristone, an anti-progesterone, and prostaglandins has been available since the 1980s. For abortions at up to 63 days' gestation, evidence suggests that mifepristone (200 mg orally) followed 36–48 hours later by either gemeprost (1 mg vaginally) or misoprostol (800 µg vaginally) are equally safe and effective, with 94–97% of women achieving complete abortion. Because of much lower costs, 72% of units use misoprostol. Complete abortion rates with single-dose mifepristone/misoprostol fall from 98.5% at ≤49 days' gestation to 96.7% at 50–63 days, but are much lower after 63 days. For women at 49–63 days, if abortion has not occurred 4 hours after administration of misoprostol, a second dose (400 µg vaginally or orally) may be administered. Between 64 and 91 days' gestation, efficacy is increased if the initial dose of misoprostol is followed by repeated doses of 400 µg. However, even using up to a maximum of five further doses, the need for surgical evacuation increased from 0.9% at 9–10 weeks to 7.9% at 12–13 weeks.

A Cochrane systematic review of medical versus surgical methods of first-trimester TOP identified only six relevant trials, mostly with small numbers. Prostaglandins used alone seemed to be less effective and more painful compared with surgical abortion; only two trials of mifepristone/prostaglandins were included. The review suggested there was inadequate evidence to comment on the acceptability and side effects of medical versus surgical abortions and called for trials to address the efficacy of currently used methods and women's preferences. This Cochrane review included the only partially randomised preference trial of medical and surgical TOP between 10 and 13 weeks. Side effects (vomiting, diarrhoea and abdominal pain) were higher in the medical group, although there was no difference in the rates of major complications up to 8 weeks after the procedure. Subsequent to the review there has been one further partially randomised trial of medical versus surgical methods at < 64 days' gestation. In addition to suggesting that surgical abortion had higher success rates, this study proposed that more women were satisfied with a surgical procedure.

Available evidence suggests that 17–85% of women requesting first-trimester TOP have a preference for either a medical or surgical procedure. The most common reason cited for preferring medical termination of pregnancy (MTOP) is the avoidance of surgery and/or anaesthesia. The large variation in reported preference rates may be
explained by factors such as gestational age, prior experience and time to access the procedure. Preference for STOP appears to increase with gestational age,\textsuperscript{17,18} early in pregnancy women appear to perceive the medical procedure as easier and more natural, while later it is perceived as more stressful (related to concerns about pain and seeing the fetus).\textsuperscript{20–22} If a woman has a preference for one method she is unlikely to be enrolled in a randomised trial or she may refuse the allocated method.\textsuperscript{21} To represent the full range of service users, randomised trials need to include preference arms.

Service users’ evaluations of the care they have received are clearly important in the context of current initiatives to develop a more patient-centred NHS. Patient satisfaction with their care is the most commonly used indicator in research on patient evaluations,\textsuperscript{23} but definitions of satisfaction vary, and different measures incorporate different dimensions of the construct, such as adequacy, suitability and acceptability. A common problem with satisfaction measures is that they exhibit ceiling effects, i.e. most patients report being satisfied, and distinctions between care of different quality are often not observed. This is likely to be a particular problem in areas such as TOP, where patients are widely observed to experience a sense of relief after the procedure. Most studies of women’s views about TOP have reported procedure acceptability; typically women have been asked whether they would opt for the same method in the future or recommend the method to a friend.\textsuperscript{16,21,24} Data from randomised trials indicate that acceptability of both methods before 9 weeks’ gestation is high (63–92%), with 2–36% of women randomised to STOP preferring a medical procedure in future and 22–37% of women randomised to MTOP preferring STOP.\textsuperscript{16,18}

Where women have a preference for one method, typically ≥90% would choose the same method in the future.\textsuperscript{17,20–22,24} Acceptability may be lower at later gestations; in the only randomised trial of abortion methods at 10–13 weeks’ gestation, more women opted for VA again than medical abortion (79% versus 70% respectively).\textsuperscript{18} However, response rates were low (< 50%). The results reported above are based on the ‘single question with a binary outcome’ approach to assessing acceptability. Such measures are simple to collect and report, but provide limited information, particularly about why respondents hold the views they do. One supplementary approach is to ask respondents to rate specific features of their care, thereby providing information about the reasons underlying acceptability judgements. Using a semantic differential rating scale, Henshaw et al.\textsuperscript{17} identified that in randomised women, medical abortion rated lower on six of the bipolar adjectives with pain showing by far the largest difference. VA was also rated less painful in women allocated according to preference.

The psychological effects of TOP have recently been reviewed.\textsuperscript{25} The authors concluded that TOP rarely causes immediate or lasting negative psychological consequences in healthy women. Indeed several studies reported positive outcomes such as relief.\textsuperscript{25} Henshaw et al.\textsuperscript{17} performed a partially randomised preference trial of TOP at < 9 weeks’ gestation and found no differences in depression, anxiety or low self-esteem 2 weeks after the procedure\textsuperscript{26} nor, in a much smaller number, 2 years later.\textsuperscript{27} Whether MTOP is associated with more adverse psychological consequences after 9 weeks’ gestation is not known.

Although many studies have reported the outcomes of first-trimester TOP, very few have randomised the method of abortion, and only one has included women beyond 9 weeks of pregnancy, despite the fact that this group constitutes over 40% of TOPs.\textsuperscript{18} There is a need for a partially randomised preference trial comparing VA with current methods of medical abortion. In addition to patient acceptability, the trial needs to determine the clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of the two methods.

There is a clear policy impetus to understand, qualitatively, women’s preferences for medical or surgical TOP and the decision-making processes that lead both to these preferences and to encounters with health services. The personal and political sensitivities that surround TOP have important consequences for research in the field. The most important of these is resistance to inquiry into decision-making and action where this may threaten the moral viability of the woman’s decisions. This means that although TOP is one of the most common procedures in the UK, little work has been done that will contribute to robust understanding of preferences for types of procedures. Instead, the objective of much research in the field has been aimed at understanding decision-making on termination in relation to promoting access or reducing delays in referral to clinical services. Recently, this approach has led to an important qualitative study in the UK. In this study, Kumar et al.\textsuperscript{28,29} have shown that most women prefer not to discuss their decision with clinicians, but prefer instead to receive information and prompt referral. Unease about discussing
personal aspects of termination has also been registered among professionals, especially nurses and midwives (this may also explain the paucity of social science research in the field). Factors affecting the choice of method of termination are already known to be highly complex. The problem of decision-making and preferences around termination is, therefore, quite unlike any other arena of clinical research, especially other areas where approaches to shared decision-making have become prominent in recent years.

The intensive investigation of the experiences and preferences women had within the trial provided a point of departure for the qualitative substudy. This drew on data collected within the economic substudy of strength of preferences, and was an optional final phase of the trial experienced by a subgroup of 30 women. Qualitative substudies within trials tend to be used either as initial (reconnaissance) studies to assist in decision-making about instrument design, study organisation and recruitment; or as formative process evaluations of ongoing work. In the present study, we intended to take a different tack, using the qualitative investigation as a means of illuminating women’s responses to (1) the experience of participating in the trial and (2) their perspectives on the results of the economic study of strength of preference. Directly focusing on these topics will provide useful data, but will also indirectly open up earlier decision-making processes and questions of access to investigation. A key problem in qualitative studies of personally sensitive experiences and actions is that of the participant being forced to construct an account that provides a justification for action in the face of anticipated moral judgements by an external authority; this makes for bias in accounts. We have adopted an approach to study design and data collection that was explicitly intended to move the focus of participants’ accounts away from personal justification towards a wider explanatory perspective. We did this by asking participants to act as lay interpreters of data collected elsewhere in the study (see Chapter 3, Discrete choice experiment) and focused on the preferences and action of ‘notional others’, using this interpretive function as a starting point for their own accounts. This approach meant that its design and application did not risk confounding recruitment and retention of participants, or other data collection, where these were already likely to be a challenge.
Chapter 2

Methods

Design

This was a partially randomised controlled preference trial comparing MTOP and STOP at less than 14 weeks’ gestation. The principal outcome was acceptability of termination method as determined by preference for a future method of termination. This design ensured the inclusion of women who had a prior procedure preference (preference group) and those who did not (randomised group), and therefore reflects the population of a normal clinical setting. A substantial qualitative component was utilised to gather information about women’s motives for joining the trial, their personal experiences of seeking termination and their decision-making process. Data collected using ‘strength of preference’ and the model developed from conjoint economic analysis were used as the focus to obtain women’s perspectives. The study was approved by the Newcastle and North Tyneside Research Ethics Committee 2 (Reference 05/Q0906/38).

Participants

Participants were women accepted for TOP under clause C of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act (1990) amendment of the Abortion Act (1967) with pregnancies < 14 weeks’ gestation (based on ultrasound assessment of fetal size) at the time of abortion between 18 July 2005 and 31 January 2008 (31 months).

Inclusion criteria

1. Women who had an unwanted pregnancy of < 14 weeks’ gestation.
2. Women who were able to give written consent.
3. Women < 16 years of age who were deemed Fraser competent by the nurse practitioner and had a parent or legal guardian present who was also willing to give written consent.

Exclusion criteria

1. Women with a pre-existing medical disorder that was an indication for either MTOP or STOP.
2. Non-English-speaking women (apart from French, Mandarin, Cantonese, Bengali, Urdu and Arabic) due to limited availability of interpreters.
3. Previous participation in the trial.
5. Lack of availability of either MTOP or STOP within 10 days of outpatient assessment.

Setting

The trial was conducted at the Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI), Newcastle upon Tyne, UK. The hospital is a large tertiary unit that provides both medical and surgical TOP up to 20 weeks’ gestation to women throughout the north-east of England. The unit undertakes around 1800 terminations per year. The termination service has undergone continual development over the last 15 years in response to the needs of the women who access it. Women referred from primary care (general practice or sexual and reproductive health clinics) are seen by one of three nurse practitioners in assessment clinics which run 5 days per week. Towards the end of the trial, because of increasing referrals to the service, additional clinics were started on one evening and on a Saturday morning.

Recruitment

All women being referred to the TOP service were given an information leaflet by their referring health professional. The leaflet contained information about abortion services at the RVI as well as an explanation of medical and surgical TOP and common complications. When women arrived in the outpatient clinic they were given a patient information sheet about the Newcastle upon Tyne TOPS study and asked to read it before seeing the nurse practitioner. Women at < 14 weeks’ gestation who were accepted for TOP had the two methods of abortion explained. The nurse practitioner emphasised that there was no evidence that one method was superior to the other, that women, therefore, had a choice of method and that research was being conducted into women’s preferences for abortion method. Women
interested in participating were immediately referred to the research nurse in an adjacent room. The research nurse explained the study, answered any questions and, where appropriate, took written consent.

Within a few months of starting the trial, it became obvious that fewer recruited women than expected were prepared to have their method of abortion determined by randomisation. The potential factors contributing to this were extensively discussed by both the Trial Management Group and Trial Steering Committee, and changes to the recruitment procedure were proposed to try to increase recruitment to the randomised arm. An action plan was agreed and after approval by Newcastle and North Tyneside Research Ethics Committee, the following changes were implemented from 7 August 2006:

1. The information leaflet about the service at the RVI (Appendix 1) was amended to indicate that there was no medical evidence that one method of TOP was ‘better’ than the other and that research was being undertaken into women’s preferences on abortion method. The amended leaflet was sent to all referring general practices and sexual and reproductive health clinics with a covering letter to encourage professionals to give this to referred women.

2. The research patient information sheet was amended to emphasise the value of randomisation and to better explain the process.

3. The dialogue used by the nurse practitioners when introducing the trial was standardised.

Randomisation

Participants with no preference, and willing to be allocated a procedure at random, were randomised using a purpose-designed computer system with web-based access for trial personnel (PowerTrial). All randomised allocations of procedure were performed by the research nurse and the allocation was concealed from the research nurse and participant until recruitment to the randomised arm had been completed; data entry of specific relevant information on the randomisation page of the database confirmed eligibility and allowed procedure assignment to take place. Allocation to medical or surgical arms was by a random sequence utilising a block size of 4. Randomisation was stratified according to gestation (< 9 weeks and 9–14 weeks) and for previous TOP.

Participants with a preference for MTOP or STOP were assigned to their method of preference. Thus there were four groups of participants in the trial:

1. randomised surgical (RS)
2. randomised medical (RM)
3. preference surgical (PS)
4. preference medical (PM).

Interventions

Surgical termination procedure

Women randomised to, or with a preference for, STOP were admitted to the gynaecological day unit on the morning of the procedure. All women were primed with misoprostol 400 μg vaginally at least 2 hours prior to the anticipated time of STOP. All STOP procedures were performed under general anaesthesia. Gestational age was confirmed on the operating table prior to cervical dilatation by ultrasound measurement of fetal crown–rump length or biparietal diameter or by pelvic examination. Following cervical dilatation with graded Hegar dilators, VA was performed using an aspiration curette size (in mm) equivalent to the gestational age (in weeks). A 12-mm aspiration curette was used for all VA procedures ≥ 12 weeks’ gestation. Virtually all STOP procedures were performed by two consultant gynaecologists each of whom had a weekly dedicated operating list. In the absence of excessive bleeding or other problems, women were discharged 1–2 hours after the procedure. In line with the recommendations of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG), STOP was only performed after 6 weeks’ gestation because of the higher failure rate at very early gestations. The appointment for STOP was timed in line with this recommendation.

Medical termination procedure

Women undergoing MTOP were given mifepristone 200 mg orally and observed for 1–2 hours on the gynaecology ward. In the absence of vomiting they were allowed home, to return to the ward at 0800 36–48 hours later. Women ≤ 9 weeks’ gestation were given misoprostol 800 μg vaginally. A further dose of misoprostol 400 μg was given 4 hours later, vaginally or orally (depending on vaginal bleeding), if no abortion had occurred. Subsequently, if abortion did not occur and bleeding was not excessive, women were routinely discharged between 1630 and 1700, with an appointment for outpatient review 2 weeks later. At the time of the review all women underwent an
ultrasound scan to exclude an ongoing pregnancy or retained products of conception (RPC).  

Women ≥ 9 + 1 weeks’ gestation were given misoprostol 800 µg vaginally followed by misoprostol 400 µg every 3 hours up to a maximum of four doses if no abortion had occurred. If abortion had not occurred by midnight a further dose of mifepristone 200 mg orally was administered followed by gemeprost 1 mg vaginally 3-hourly from 0800 up to a maximum of five doses. If abortion had still not occurred by 0800 the following morning, MTOP was deemed to have failed and STOP arranged. In all cases expelled products were examined to confirm they were complete; if there was any doubt, an ultrasound scan was performed. Cases where the placenta was retained after expulsion of the fetus (confirmed by ultrasound examination and/or speculum examination) without significant bleeding were managed with a further dose of misoprostol 400 µg vaginally. Failure to pass the placenta after a further 3–4 hours was managed with surgical evacuation of RPC. Uterotonic agents were not used routinely during TOP procedures.  

All women were given doxycycline 100 mg orally twice daily for 7 days, commencing on the day before or the day of the procedure. All women undergoing STOP were given metronidazole 1 g rectally at the time of the abortion. Pain relief was available for all women, comprising paracetamol 1 g orally, diclofenac 75 mg orally or pethidine 100 mg intramuscularly. Non-sensitised rhesus D-negative women were given anti-D immunoglobulin 1250 iu intramuscularly prior to discharge from hospital.

Objectives

The aim of this partially randomised preference trial was to determine the acceptability, efficacy and costs of medical compared with surgical TOP at < 14 weeks’ gestation. There was also a need to understand women’s decision-making processes and experiences when accessing the termination service and taking part in research.

Primary objective

The primary objective was to determine acceptability as revealed by preference for future TOP method at 2 weeks post procedure in women randomised to medical or surgical TOP.

Null hypothesis

The null hypothesis was ‘In women without prior preference, medical and surgical terminations are equally acceptable’.

Secondary objectives

The secondary objectives were to compare surgical and medical procedures by assessing:

1. strength of preference
2. psychological sequelae
3. satisfaction with care
4. experiences of care
5. frequency and severity of procedure-related symptoms
6. clinical effectiveness
7. costs and cost-effectiveness.

Qualitative substudy

The aim of the substudy was to better understand the foundations of women’s preferences and decision-making about method of termination. The objectives were:

1. to identify, describe and understand women’s motives for joining the trial and their experiences of participation in it
2. to identify, describe and understand women’s personal experiences of seeking termination and decision-making about method of termination
3. to identify, describe and understand women’s perspectives on data collected on ‘strength of preference’ and the model developed from conjoint economic analysis.

Data collection

Baseline demographic data, including medical history and method of any previous termination, level of education, occupation and income, was collected by the nurse practitioner or research nurse from all participants. Contact details, including where possible mobile telephone numbers and availability, were also collected. All participants were invited to return for an outpatient assessment 2 weeks after the procedure and all assessments were undertaken in a hospital or community clinic. Outcome data were collected at 2 weeks (by structured interview and/or questionnaire) and at 3 months (by questionnaire) after the procedure (Table 1). For women who did not attend their 2-week follow-up visit, collection
Methods

TABLE 1 Table of events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Visit 1 (baseline)</th>
<th>Visit 2 (TOP)</th>
<th>Visit 3 (post TOP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Up to –2 weeks</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion/exclusion screening</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written informed consent</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randomisation if applicable</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason for preference if applicable</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demography + baseline data</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical history</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Concomitant medication</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td></td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultrasound</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength of preference</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td></td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Termination procedure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual analogue scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical progress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact of Events Scale</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Consent for qualitative interviewb</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Only determined prior to procedure in the preference group.
b Qualitative interviews to be completed prior to 3-month time point.

of outcome data, as previously agreed, was undertaken via telephone interview, mobile text message and postal- or web-based questionnaire. All follow-up contacts and telephone interviews were conducted by a research nurse.

After the trial commenced, the distributions of the time it took women to respond to the questions asked at the 2-week and 3-month follow-ups were established. In view of these distributions, the Trial Management Group decided only to use responses (referred to as 'timely responses') if the date they were provided was within 4 weeks of the intended time after the procedure, i.e. 2-week data were accepted if it was provided within 42 days of TOP, and 3-month data were accepted if it was provided within 60–120 days after TOP.

Outcome measures

Acceptability

This was determined at 2 weeks and 3 months after the procedure by responses to the closed question ‘If you ever have another termination of pregnancy, would you opt for the same method?’ This simple question has been used in previous preference trials of TOP\textsuperscript{17,18} and has the advantage of being easily determined by telephone, questionnaire or text message.

Strength of preference

Willingness to pay (WTP) was used as a measure of strength of preference for medical or surgical TOP. This technique is being increasingly used in health technology assessment\textsuperscript{37} and has been used previously for assessing strength of preference for abortion method.\textsuperscript{27,38} An instrument was designed in order to frame a hypothetical scenario where women imagined that they had been offered their non-preferred method and that they had to pay an additional amount of money from their own income to obtain their preferred method. The economic theory underlying this design is part of welfare economic theory, which posits that individuals will choose their preferred set of goods (in this case, type of termination) from the total set of goods available subject to each set incurring some cost that must be met from some
fixed budget/income. Therefore, assuming full information, i.e. individuals know all the costs, the maximum amount that someone states they would be ‘willing to pay’ to get a new set indicates whether that set is preferred to the other. This is because this amount implies an opportunity cost, i.e. assuming that their current set was the preferred one, paying this extra amount must entail the loss of something that they wanted. This amount also entails a strength of preference to the extent that the greater the amount stated, the greater the opportunity cost, i.e. the more that the individual is willing to give up *ceteris paribus*. The bigger the income, the greater the amount of goods can be afforded. Therefore, observing a correlation between income and WTP is a useful test of validity.

Interviews were conducted using the payment card method, with all women in the preference arm at baseline (following recruitment to the study) prior to admission for the procedure. Women were asked to state their maximum WTP amount for the termination method they had chosen. Interviews were also conducted on all women in both the randomised and preference arms at 2 weeks after the procedure when they were asked to state their maximum WTP amount to receive their preferred option at a future date. In order to avoid arbitrary units (and to encourage elicitation of the maximum amount) an approach was used that presented actual amounts in order. Mean WTP for each TOP method was estimated by calculating the sample mean for women in the randomised and preference arms. There are potential sources of bias with WTP elicitation. For example, stating zero might be due to a misunderstanding or suspicion that the scenario is not hypothetical or the assumption that it is the price that is wanted. Mean WTP was therefore also calculated excluding zero payers. A comparison was then made between mean WTP for MTOP and STOP (stratified by method to which women were randomised) and between randomised and preference arms to test the hypothesis that women who already have a preference (indicated by actual choice of procedure) will have a stronger subsequent preference (indicated by stated WTP for hypothetical future procedure). Finally, the validity of women’s responses was tested by examining the correlation between stated WTP and level of income.

**Distress, anxiety and depression**

Distress was measured using the Impact of Event Scale (IES) at 2 weeks and 3 months after the procedure. This 15-item scale, with subscales for intrusion and avoidance, measures subjective distress to a specific event (in this case TOP), and is most likely to detect a difference in actual experience of having one procedure rather than another. Anxiety and depression were measured using the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) at 2 weeks and 3 months after the procedure. This is a widely used 14-item self-report scale designed for medical patients. Depression is the main problem service providers have been concerned about. Both the IES and HADS have been used in women after TOP.

**Satisfaction with care**

The methodological pitfalls of measuring satisfaction with care have been reviewed. Women were asked to rate the quality of care during the termination and the counselling and support after the procedure using a 5-point Likert scale (from excellent to poor) at 2 weeks and 3 months after the procedure. Measures in which patients are asked to rate the quality aspects of their care show greater response variability than measures which seek direct ratings of satisfaction and are better predictors of whether patients will return to the same doctor in the future. For analysis we distinguished those who rated their care as excellent from the remainder as this provided better discrimination. Ratings of care were supplemented by information on satisfaction with care from the qualitative substudy.

**Experience of care**

To provide information about the reasons underlying acceptability judgements, we used a semantic differential rating technique administered at 2 weeks and 3 months post procedure. This instrument used a pair of opposite adjectives (e.g. painless–painful) as end points on a graphic Likert scale. Women were asked to indicate their experience by placing a mark on the scale. Twelve bipolar adjectives were used, scored along an evaluation dimension representing a positive or negative attitude ranging from 3 to –3. Rating scores are quick and easy to complete and have been used previously to measure attitude towards TOP.

**Frequency and extent of symptoms**

The incidence of nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, dizziness and abdominal pain on the day of the procedure was recorded as well as an assessment of
the severity of pain, using a 10-cm visual analogue scale (VAS), and analgesic use. Symptoms after discharge were ascertained at the 2-week follow-up contact by the research nurse. These included the duration and severity of vaginal bleeding and pain as well as the length of time off work and time taken to return to normal activity.18

Medication use was recorded at baseline and at the time of the termination procedure by abstraction from the medical notes. Women were also asked about concomitant medications at the 2-week follow-up contact.

Clinical effectiveness

Previous studies have used a variety of measures of clinical effectiveness, but emphasis has been placed on failed TOP (with an ongoing viable pregnancy), incomplete abortion and presumed pelvic infection. Based on our proposed sample size (see below), the precision with which differences in each of these complications could be detected was limited. Hence a combined measure of clinical effectiveness that captures unplanned time spent in hospital, a key outcome for women, was used.

Unplanned or emergency admission was defined as (1) any unplanned admission requiring an overnight stay on the day of TOP or (2) emergency admission requiring an overnight stay after discharge from hospital following the primary procedure. Women were asked to report any attendances at their general practitioner (GP) surgery or hospital and any admissions at 2 weeks and 3 months after the procedure to ensure that all data on adverse outcomes were collected. The indication for referral and subsequent management were abstracted from the hospital or primary care notes. It was assumed that this outcome would capture all women with significant procedure-related morbidity due to (1) incomplete abortion, missed abortion or ongoing pregnancy (all of which require surgical evacuation) and (2) pelvic infection without RPC. Further, there is evidence to suggest that women who experience a failed TOP (requiring surgical evacuation) or excessive pain and or bleeding that results in admission are more likely to classify the experience as unsatisfactory46 and to opt not to have the same procedure again in the future.24,46

Total procedure-related complications were also compared. A complication was defined by any of the following:

1. Haemorrhage: estimated blood loss > 500 ml.47
2. Incomplete abortion: products of conception passed, but clinical or ultrasound evidence of RPC.15
3. Failed TOP: no products of conception passed and cardiac activity present on ultrasound.15
4. Suspected pelvic infection (in the absence of RPC): based on the clinician’s assessment [abnormal vaginal bleeding ± abdominal pain with uterine tenderness ± pyrexia (temperature ≥37.5°C)] and treatment (prescription of antibiotics).48

Sample size

The sample size was determined by the main comparison of acceptability (as assessed by the proportion of women who would opt for the same TOP method again) between women randomised to medical or surgical TOP. Assuming the acceptability of medical termination to be 75%,17,18,20 responses from 335 women in each randomised arm were needed to detect a difference in acceptability of 10% (i.e. from 75% to 85%) with a significance level of 5% and power of 90%. This difference in the level of acceptability between MTOP and STOP was deemed important for both consumers and providers; a similar difference was sought by Ashok et al.18 in their large randomised comparison of abortion methods.

Based on the sample size calculation we therefore needed primary outcome data on 670 women randomised to medical or surgical TOP at < 14 weeks’ gestation. In order to achieve this number we calculated that:

• 1116 women would need to be randomised (assuming primary outcome data would not be available from 40% of women)
• 2232 women would need to be recruited (assuming 50% of women agreeing to participate in the study would have a preference for medical or surgical TOP)
• 3188 women would need to be approached (assuming 30% of women accepted for TOP would decline involvement in the study).

All three assumptions were based on the experience from our earlier pilot trial conducted at the RVI involving women requesting TOP at 9–13 weeks’ gestation. For reasons detailed in Kumar et al.28 we believed that our assumption of 60% follow-up was conservative. Previous trials conducted in the UK
had reported that 54%\textsuperscript{17} and 82%\textsuperscript{18} of recruited women undergoing TOP at < 9 weeks and 9–13 weeks, respectively, were prepared to have their method of TOP determined by randomisation. Thus our estimate that 50% of women agreeing to follow-up would be prepared to be randomised was also thought to be conservative. The proportions of women accepted for TOP who agreed to join these two prior randomised preference trials were not reported. Data from non-randomised studies conducted in the UK suggested that 87–92% of similar women were prepared to participate in studies involving follow-up (including psychological questionnaires) after TOP, suggesting that our assumption of 70% (based on the pilot study) was realistic.

**Statistical methods**

The study was designed to ensure the inclusion of women who had a prior procedure preference. Participants with a preference for either medical or surgical termination could choose one or the other (preference groups). Participants with no preference, who were willing to be allocated a procedure at random (randomised groups), were randomised using a computer system. The analysis strategy was similar to that used in a partially randomised preference trial of treatment for depression.\textsuperscript{49} All data analysis was on an intention-to-treat basis, according to the inclusion/exclusion criteria.

The partially randomised preference design allows the following questions to be investigated:

1. Are the women who choose a procedure different from those who are randomised to one?
2. Which TOP procedure is more acceptable and effective?
3. Do women allocated to procedure of their choice fare better than those who are randomised?

Women effectively chose to be in one of three groups: preference for MTOP (PM), preference for STOP (PS) or randomised to either (RM or RS). Therefore, question 1 was answered by comparing the distributions of baseline variables between these three groups to see if there were any differences. Overall tests for equality of the three groups was carried out (chi-squared for comparison of proportions or ANOVA for comparison of means), and if there was a statistically significant difference between them, comparisons were made firstly between the two preference arms and then between combined preference versus combined randomised arms.

According to the original protocol, the primary comparisons for question 2 should have been carried out between the randomised arms of the study. However, from an early stage in data collection it was clear that there would be far too few women willing to be randomised for analysis to be definitive, so primary comparisons were carried out between women in the preference arms of the trial. The main comparison of the primary outcome was between the two preference arms at 2 weeks, and then at 3 months. This was then repeated for the two randomised arms, and then for the combined preference arms compared with the combined randomised arms (to answer question 3).

Acceptability (proportions willing to have the same termination procedure again) was compared via binomial regression including key baseline variables as covariates in the model (previous TOP, previous live birth, mother’s age, educational level and gestation at TOP). However, the comparisons of the randomised groups did not adjust for these covariates: multivariate models would not converge because of the smaller sample size, but the groups are likely to be balanced on these covariates via the random allocation. Possible interactions between intervention and gestation, and intervention and past history of TOP were considered. These possible interactions are illustrated by plotting the proportion finding the procedure acceptable by gestation in weeks using a Lowess smoother for the two intervention groups. Where there was a statistically significant interaction, the difference in acceptability between intervention groups was estimated at three gestational age epochs.

The secondary outcomes were compared between the two preference arms, then between the two randomised arms, and then for combined preference arms compared with combined randomised arms. Mean ratings on the psychological scales were compared by multiple linear regression while adjusting for the key baseline variables listed above. Satisfaction with care was collected on a 5-point scale (poor to excellent), but was recoded as whether or not the women assessed their care as ‘excellent’: the trial arms were compared using binary regression adjusting for key baseline variables.
For other binary variables (e.g., occurrence of symptoms in the days after the termination, whether women had returned to work/normal activities at 2 weeks) unadjusted comparisons were made between trial arms with 95% confidence limit (CI) for the differences. Similar unadjusted comparisons were made between trial arms to compare the mean VAS pain scores (with 95% CI). The distributions of the semantic differential scales (7-point scales), strength of bleeding scale (5-point scale) and time to return to work and normal activity (in days) were compared between groups via Mann–Whitney tests. All analyses were done using stata, version 8.

Costs and cost-effectiveness analysis

Cost data relating to NHS resource use (both primary and secondary care) were collected following established methods up to 3 months post TOP. This included data relating to the initial procedure, hospital stay, follow-up care as inpatients, any additional interventions and outpatient appointments. Data relating to GP consultations and referrals/admission to other secondary care units were collected using the postal questionnaire and, if agreed previously, by telephone.

For the costing exercise the resource quantities used and the unit cost (of the resource) for each method of TOP were determined. The total cost of each TOP method is the sum of the products of the quantity of units and unit cost. Obtaining data on resource use and the unit costs of each resource item was sometimes difficult given that some information was either not routinely collected or not accessible. For such costs, assumptions guided by expert clinical opinion were used.

Total individual cost was estimated as the sum of standard and individual-level costs.

1. **Standard costs** do not vary by individual patient and were reported in two parts: initial clinic attendance (which is assumed to be the same for both methods of TOP); and TOP procedure costs (which are assumed to vary only by procedure and not by patient).
2. **Individual-level costs** are informed by individual-level data. The number of patients who consumed at least one unit of resource was determined and the mean number of units calculated by dividing the total number of units by the sample size. Total mean individual cost was calculated as the sum of the product of the unit cost and the mean number of units.

Strictly, staff costs could vary per individual, but as actual staff times were not collected per individual they are included in standard costs. For consistency, staff costs are reported, as with all other costs, in the form of a marginal cost, i.e. the extra cost that would be incurred to buy another unit of the item. Staff costs for the TOP procedure were estimated by taking the total staffing cost from the NHS Trust attributed to the ward and then estimating the proportion of bed days for TOP out of all procedures carried out on that ward. All drug costs were taken from the British National Formulary, No. 55, and refer to the price per unit actually administered (as opposed to purchased). The mean cost of an overnight stay was provided by the local NHS Trust and includes overheads. Evacuation of RPC was assumed to cost the same as STOP.

Overheads were assumed to be 28% in accordance with the local NHS Trust. Staff unit costs were expressed per minute (calculated by multiplying annual salary by the duration of the time assumed to be spent per TOP patient divided by the total possible patient contact time). Total patient contact time was estimated from 42 weeks per year at 37.5 hours per week and assuming 0.7 of that time to be spent on patient contact. The following salaries were used: nurse practitioner, £48,102.83; outpatient nurse, £18,098.00; and phlebotomist, £16,294.48.

A cost-effectiveness analysis was undertaken using standard methods whereby the average incremental cost-effectiveness ratio (ICER) was estimated as mean change in cost divided by mean change in effectiveness. Cost was estimated as total NHS cost (as above). The measure of effectiveness was number of successful TOPs, where success was defined as completion of the TOP without an unplanned overnight stay and without any of the pre-specified complications. A 95% CI was estimated using bootstrapping in order to deal with the problem of a ratio of two variables (i.e. cost and effectiveness).

Discrete choice experiment

In order to identify key factors that shape women’s preferences for termination services, a discrete choice experiment (DCE) was conducted. This technique measures the strength of an individual’s...
preference for various attributes of a clinical intervention, and has been used successfully in research relating to the provision of services for women.

The sampling frame for this part of the study was non-pregnant women attending contraception and sexual health (CoSH) clinics in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK. This sampling strategy was chosen as it reduced the research burden on the main trial sample and did not interfere with the process whereby pregnant women in the trial formed and stated preferences (for medical or surgical termination). Further, results from a non-pregnant sample might be less influenced by immediate emotional responses.

Women attending three CoSH clinics in Newcastle upon Tyne (The Flat, Graingerville and Armstrong Road) were given a patient information sheet about the DCE study by the receptionist and were asked to read it before seeing the doctor or nurse practitioner. Those women who expressed an interest in participating were referred to the research nurse, who explained the study, answered any questions and, where appropriate, took written consent.

**DCE design and attributes**

A DCE is characterised by a number of attributes that are used to describe a particular aspect of a choice, in this case alternative means of receiving health care. A provisional list of attributes was selected based on a review of the relevant literature and after seeking expert opinion from medical and nursing practitioners working in the field. These attributes were then shown to a small sample of non-pregnant women (n = 8) to ensure they were consistent with their views. The final attributes used in the TOP DCE are shown in Table 2. They cover aspects of the process and outcome that occur before the termination takes place (waiting time), during the termination (being awake, need for painkillers, and the possibility of an overnight stay), and after the termination (the provision of counselling). The explanations/definitions of each attribute that were shown to respondents in preparation for the DCE are shown in the right-hand column of Table 2.

Table 3 shows that each of the five attributes was assigned two levels, producing a total of 32 (2^5) possible combinations of attributes, hereafter referred to as ‘termination scenarios’. As this is too many scenarios to be considered by any one respondent, an orthogonal fractional factorial design was used to reduce the number of scenarios to 16.

In order to be able to present respondents with a set of choices between two scenarios (A and B), the 16 scenarios generated by the orthogonal design were designated as Choice A. These 16 scenarios were then ‘rolled over’, i.e. the attribute levels in the original 16 combinations were changed so that an attribute that was coded as level 0 in the Choice A scenarios became level 1 for the Choice B scenarios. The 16 additional scenarios to be used as Choice B were then randomly allocated to each of the original 16 scenarios (Choice A) to produce 16 (A or B) choice sets. Table 4 shows an example of a choice set, in which respondents had to indicate a choice of A, B, or neither (‘refused’).

Based on prior research, a sample size of 100 women was judged to provide precise parameter estimates with the number of attributes and choices used.

**Econometric analysis**

DCEs draw upon Lancaster’s economic theory of value and random utility theory. Equation 1 shows that the latent utility \( U_q \) for the \( i \)th alternative (termination scenario) for the individual \( q \) is made up of two components:

\[
U_q = V_q + \epsilon_q
\]

where \( V_q = \alpha + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \beta_5X_5 + \beta_6X_6 \) and is the deterministic or explainable part of utility, and where \( \epsilon_q \) is the random component that represents the unobservable influences that affect utility. \( V_q \) is a linear function of the attribute levels characterising termination care (X1 to X6), where the coefficients \( \beta_1 \) to \( \beta_6 \) are estimated in the model and \( \alpha \) is a constant term that detects any unobservable influences affecting individual’s choices. The unobservable influences are assumed not to be related in any systematic way with the observed effects thus collapsing all such influences into \( \epsilon_q \).

Assuming the error term to be Gumbel distributed produces a multinomial logit model.

For purposes of the analysis the data were coded using effects codes (shown in Table 3). When using effects codes the sign of the coefficient indicates which of the attribute levels is preferred. Thus, a negative result for the attribute of being conscious

\[
V_{iq} = \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \beta_5X_5 + \beta_6X_6
\]

and is the deterministic or explainable part of utility, and where \( \epsilon_q \) is the random component that represents the unobservable influences that affect utility. \( V_q \) is a linear function of the attribute levels characterising termination care (X1 to X6), where the coefficients \( \beta_1 \) to \( \beta_6 \) are estimated in the model and \( \alpha \) is a constant term that detects any unobservable influences affecting individual’s choices. The unobservable influences are assumed not to be related in any systematic way with the observed effects thus collapsing all such influences into \( \epsilon_q \).

Assuming the error term to be Gumbel distributed produces a multinomial logit model.
TABLE 2 Discrete choice experiment: attribute definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will I be conscious during the termination process?</td>
<td>For some types of termination of pregnancy you will be unconscious, which means that you will be asleep and you will not see the fetus (this is what the baby is called from 8 weeks of pregnancy until birth). For other types of termination of pregnancy you will stay awake during the procedure and pass the pregnancy very much like a miscarriage. You might see the fetus. If the procedure occurs early in the pregnancy, it will be difficult to recognise the fetus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will I be given counselling after the termination?</td>
<td>After the procedure you will be given a contact number to ring after discharge in case you want to talk to a trained counsellor about the way you are feeling. This will give you an opportunity to talk in confidence with someone who will listen carefully without judgement, so that you can be supported to find how to resolve the issues that are making you feel the way that you do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many days would I wait from my initial appointment to having the termination?</td>
<td>Your initial appointment to request a termination would be with your GP or a family planning clinic. An appointment to have the termination will then be made with the clinic that does the termination. The time between the initial appointment and having the termination is how long you would wait.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will I need painkillers?</td>
<td>You might experience tummy pain. This can happen just before or after the termination. The pain feels like the pain many women experience at the beginning of their monthly period. If you do not need painkillers, this means that you have no or little pain. If you do need painkillers, this means that you do have pain, but most women only need tablets, although sometimes women need something stronger, e.g. an injection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will I have to stay overnight in hospital after the termination?</td>
<td>If the pregnancy is no more than 9 weeks, you will go home the same day. Where a drug is used to cause the termination and if the pregnancy is over 9 weeks, you might have to stay overnight. This is because it might take up to 15 hours for the drug to work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 3 Discrete choice experiment: characteristic descriptions and levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Levels (effects code used in analysis)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will the woman be conscious during the termination process?</td>
<td>Yes (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No (–1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the women be offered post-termination counselling?</td>
<td>Yes (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No (–1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What will be the number of days delay from the initial appointment to procedure?</td>
<td>7 days (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14 days (–1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will analgesics be required for pain relief?</td>
<td>Yes (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No (–1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the procedure involve an overnight stay in hospital?</td>
<td>Yes (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No (–1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 4 Discrete choice experiment: example of a choice card

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Choice A</th>
<th>Choice B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will I be conscious during the termination process?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will I be given counselling after the termination?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many days would I wait from my initial appointment to having the termination?</td>
<td>7 days</td>
<td>7 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will I need painkillers?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will I have to stay overnight in hospital after the termination?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

would indicate that the preferred level is the one coded as –1, i.e. the woman prefers not to be conscious.

The trade-offs that women would make between termination attributes was determined by calculating the marginal rate of substitution (MRS). For a linearly additive model, the MRS between two attributes is the ratio of the coefficients of those two attributes.60

Qualitative substudy

We used a model of preference developed from the DCE as the basis for a semi-structured interview. A conventional model of qualitative analysis was used.62 The analytic product of this work was: (1) a comparative model of preferences and their normative constraints, and (2) a model of contextual features that affect decision-making about TOP.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria for the substudy were the same as the trial. The sample recruited to the substudy was neither intended to be statistically representative nor to be a maximum variation sample; sampling was purposive and sequential in order to achieve maximum variation and representation from each arm of the trial. We expected a high rate of refusal to join the substudy and of attrition among those who did. This meant that although inclusion and exclusion criteria were the same as for the main trial, the sample entering the qualitative substudy was highly selected. The aim was to recruit 32 women, eight from each arm (i.e. PM, PS, RM and RS).

Women entering the trial between December 2006 and September 2007 were provided with a patient information sheet about the substudy on discharge after their procedure. At the 2-week follow-up, research nurses asked women if they had read the information and would like to participate in the substudy. Those who agreed to be interviewed provided their contact details (mostly mobile telephone numbers). With their verbal consent, the researcher sent a letter to provide written details of the interview date and place (with a map provided where needed) and contact numbers for the interviewee to ring if necessary. The researcher also used text messaging to send reminders, confirm appointments and provide directions.

Data collection

Participants were given a choice of three locations to hold the interview: 10 chose to be interviewed at home, seven at the hospital and 13 at the research institute where the researcher was based. Women were interviewed at a mean of 10 (range 6–16) weeks after the procedure. The women were asked to sign a consent form stating that they had read the information sheet, had had the opportunity to ask questions and had voluntarily agreed to take part in the study. The interview covered women’s experience of entering and participating in the trial and their understanding of the trial. They also gave accounts of their experience of referral pathways into the service and clinical trial and their experiences of termination and its outcome. The duration of the interviews averaged 50 (range 27–64) minutes. Interviews were recorded using a digital recorder and were transcribed by an experienced medical secretary who removed identifying personal details. All transcripts were then edited for accuracy.

Data analysis

Anonymised transcripts formed the formal data for qualitative analysis. Following the conventional model of constant comparative analysis of a transcribed data set,62 transcripts were interpreted iteratively, identifying and elaborating themes within participants’ accounts. Thematic analysis was facilitated by QSR Nvivo 7 software. Descriptive and factual themes (or nodes) arose out of the topic
## TABLE 5 Qualitative analysis: analytic themes/nodes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent node</th>
<th>Child node</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trial participation</strong></td>
<td>Feelings about participating</td>
<td>Feelings about being a trial participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understanding about the research</td>
<td>What participants understood about the research, e.g. its purpose and the benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information and data collection</td>
<td>What participants thought of the information and data collection procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reasons for taking part</td>
<td>The reasons that participants gave for taking part in the trial and substudy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benefits from participating</td>
<td>How they personally benefited by participating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any concerns</td>
<td>Any doubts, fears or anxieties about participating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experiences of the different stages</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Narrative accounts of the different stages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discovery</td>
<td>Experience of finding out about the pregnancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Referral</td>
<td>Experience of referral services; issues of access, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Experience at the TOP and trial assessment clinic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Procedure</td>
<td>Experience of undergoing the procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discharge</td>
<td>Experience of discharge from the hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-TOP health care</td>
<td>Experience of health care after the procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decision-making</strong></td>
<td>Having the TOP</td>
<td>How participants came to a decision to have a TOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Random or preference</td>
<td>How participants came to a decision about which arm of the trial to join</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surgical or medical</td>
<td>How participants came to a decision on method of termination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Having a choice</td>
<td>Participants’ thoughts on the importance of patient choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOP at home</td>
<td>Participants’ thoughts on having the procedure at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local anaesthetic</td>
<td>What participants thought of having a local anaesthetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Satisfaction and future preference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Significant others</strong></td>
<td>Male partner</td>
<td>The influence of their reproductive partner in their decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experiences of health care</strong></td>
<td>Health-care professionals</td>
<td>Narrative accounts of particular aspects of their experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clinic layout and privacy</td>
<td>Experience of treatment by health-care professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practical issues</td>
<td>Waiting and visitor areas, toileting facilities and private space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>Personal experiences of counselling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Waiting time</td>
<td>Personal experiences of waiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meanings and attitudes to TOP</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>More specific attitudes to TOP that include perception of the fetus and their relationship to it. Includes others’ perceptions of abortion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women’s preferences</strong></td>
<td>Being unconscious</td>
<td>Women’s responses to the results of the DCE: views and preferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Waiting time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overnight stay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Painkillers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 5 Qualitative analysis: analytic themes/nodes (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent node</th>
<th>Child node</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional features</td>
<td></td>
<td>Any features to be considered in addition to those in the DCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social background</td>
<td></td>
<td>Employment, household and other contextual information about participants’ circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical history</td>
<td></td>
<td>References to episodes of illness previous to TOP; compares past experiences of health care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symptoms and side effects</td>
<td></td>
<td>Includes sickness, vomiting, pain, bleeding, dizziness, tiredness, loss of appetite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughts and reflections</td>
<td></td>
<td>Additional thoughts and reflections, e.g. about emotional reaction, coping, reproductive future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment issues</td>
<td></td>
<td>The impact of pregnancy and TOP on paid employment, e.g. application for time off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information sources</td>
<td></td>
<td>Identification of lay sources of information for decision-making on TOP, e.g. internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other influences</td>
<td></td>
<td>Additional influences to decision-making, e.g. religion, chance encounters, previous TOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications for patient care</td>
<td></td>
<td>References suggesting scope for improvements in patient care</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

guide while referential nodes were drawn from the literature review and analytical questions arising from reading and interrogating the data. Themes were indexed and searches for discrete instances of codeable items of speech were undertaken in both cumulative comparisons (i.e. between interviews in the same arm of the trial) and condition comparisons (i.e. across interviews gathered from different arms of the trial). A coding frame of 46 parent and child nodes was created\(^{63}\) (Table 5) and the nodes were checked for consistency under each theme. Each interview was also coded as a case with attributes, e.g. age, education and income for base data information. Interviewees’ responses to the DCE were also coded as case attributes for an analysis of their preferences. In order to guard against the fragmentation of data through this ‘code and retrieve’ method of data analysis, fieldwork notes summarising the main points were written after each interview by the research associate, and individual interviews were examined as whole documents by the trial coinvestigator responsible for the substudy. Comparisons across the interviews within individual nodes were then carried out and the data collated and analysed thematically under headings such as Trial Participation, Decision-making, Significant Others and Experiences of Health Care.
Chapter 3

Results

Participant flow

Between 18 July 2005 and 31 January 2008, 4406 women were seen by the abortion service requesting TOP; 1324 women were ineligible for the study (Table 6). Of the 3082 eligible women with a viable pregnancy < 14 weeks’ gestation, 634 (20.6%) were not approached because of logistic problems (Table 7) and 41 women (1.3%) were not referred to the research nurse by the nurse practitioner because of complex psychological or social problems.

Of the 2407 suitable women approached by the research nurse, 530 (22%) declined to take part in the study and 1877 were enrolled. Of these, 349 women agreed to be randomised and 1528 women were enrolled in the preference arms, of whom 705 (46%) preferred STOP and 823 (54%) preferred MTOP (Figure 1). Twenty-two women (1.2%) enrolled in the trial were recruited with the aid of an interpreter, the biggest group speaking Mandarin (n = 11).

A total of 76 women (4.0%) did not attend for the abortion procedure: 58 (3.8%) in the preference

---

**TABLE 6** Reasons for ineligibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gestation &gt; 14 weeks (at time of TOP)</td>
<td>523 (39.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided about abortion decision (referred to counsellor)</td>
<td>273 (20.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-supported foreign language</td>
<td>137 (10.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscarriage</td>
<td>118 (8.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous participant in trial</td>
<td>92 (6.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision to continue with pregnancy</td>
<td>48 (3.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 16 years unaccompanied</td>
<td>41 (3.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirement for medical review</td>
<td>23 (1.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not pregnant</td>
<td>20 (1.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical indication for TOP method</td>
<td>18 (1.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOP declined by nurse practitioner</td>
<td>12 (0.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to give consent</td>
<td>10 (0.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9 (0.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1324 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 7** Logistic reasons for not approaching suitable women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of TOP availability within 10 days</td>
<td>329 (51.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research nurse not available</td>
<td>182 (28.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database problem</td>
<td>79 (12.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No room available for research nurse in clinic</td>
<td>24 (3.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening clinic</td>
<td>10 (1.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10 (1.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>634 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results

20

Total population (< 14 weeks) n = 3082

Not approached
Technical reasons n = 634
Clinical n = 41

Approached n = 2407

Declined n = 530

Recruited n = 1877

Randomised n = 349

Preference n = 1528

Randomised Surgical (RS) n = 187

Randomised Medical (RM) n = 162

Preference Surgical (PS) n = 705

Preference Medical (PM) n = 823

Randomised Surgical (RS) DNA TOP n = 11 Withdrawn n = 2

Randomised Medical (RM) DNA TOP n = 7 Withdrawn n = 1

Preference Surgical (PS) DNA TOP n = 34 Withdrawn n = 14

Preference Medical (PM) DNA TOP n = 24 Withdrawn n = 13

RS n = 162 MTOP n = 12 RM n = 143 STOP n = 11 PS n = 652 MTOP n = 5 PM n = 773 STOP n = 13

RS n = 125 MTOP n = 9 RM n = 115 STOP n = 8 PS n = 485 MTOP n = 3 PM n = 557 STOP n = 8

No 1º outcome n = 37
No 1º outcome n = 3
No 1º outcome n = 28
No 1º outcome n = 3
No 1º outcome n = 167
No 1º outcome n = 2
No 1º outcome n = 216
No 1º outcome n = 5

FIGURE 1 Newcastle upon Tyne TOPS recruitment process.

and 18 (5.2%) in the randomised arm. A further 30 women (1.6%) were withdrawn from the study: 27 (1.8%) in the preference arm and 3 (0.9%) in the randomised arm. The reasons for withdrawal are shown in Table 8. Thirteen women (1.6%) in the PM group subsequently underwent STOP and five women (0.7%) in the PS group subsequently underwent MTOP. Eleven women (7.0%) randomised to a medical procedure subsequently had STOP and 12 women (6.4%) randomised to a surgical procedure subsequently had MTOP. In most cases this followed a request from the participant, presumably reflecting a change in preference.

Primary outcome data at 2 weeks post abortion were collected from 1310 (70%) women: 755 (58%) by telephone questionnaire, 279 (21%) by postal questionnaire, 170 (13%) by questionnaire administered at the time of the follow-up clinic attendance, 53 (4%) by web-based questionnaire and 53 (4%) by text messaging. Satisfaction and experiences of care scales were completed by 1175 and 1173 women, respectively, while IES and HADS were completed by 773 and 775 women respectively. Acceptability data at 3 months post abortion were available from 436 women, mostly (n = 383) from postal questionnaires. However, only 403 (21%) responses were collected between 60 and 120 days.
TABLE 8 Reasons for withdrawal from trial

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for withdrawal</th>
<th>RS</th>
<th>RM</th>
<th>PS</th>
<th>PM</th>
<th>Total (number of women)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Withdrew consent to data use</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrew consent to study continuation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverse event</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;15 weeks’ gestation on day of TOP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrauterine pregnancy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method indicated</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscarried prior to any intervention</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recruitment

Two research nurses and a midwife were responsible for recruitment during the trial. Table 9 shows that there was little difference in their recruitment rates to the preference and randomised arms of the trial. However, there were some differences between the health professionals who undertook the initial clinical assessment and introduced the research nurse (Table 10). Nurse practitioner 1 had a higher proportion of randomised women than nurse practitioners 2 and 3.

Recruitment rates before and after the change in recruitment strategy are shown in Table 11. Although recruitment to the randomised arm increased slightly after 7 August 2006, this increase was not statistically significant. The slightly higher rate was not sufficient to recruit the planned numbers to the randomised arm of the trial.

Stated reason(s) for choice of method in preference arm

A total of 1516 (99%) women in the preference arm gave a reason for their preference. Of these, 232 (15%) stated two reasons. Reasons were grouped into seven broad categories (Table 12). The most frequently cited reason related to awareness during the procedure; 479 (32%) women who preferred MTOP wanted to be awake/avoid a general anaesthetic, while 213 (14%) who preferred STOP wanted to be asleep. A desire not to pass and see the fetus was the principal reason in a further 114 (8%) of women who preferred STOP. Prior personal experience of TOP or miscarriage/labour was the primary reason stated by 161 (11%) of women, with almost half preferring STOP. Temporal reasons were reported by 240 (16%) women, with those who wanted the minimum number of visits/length of stay predominantly choosing STOP while a shorter time to MTOP was important for some women. Of the remaining reasons, 156 (10%) related to one procedure (mostly MTOP) being perceived as ‘easier’, ‘less traumatic’ or being associated with fewer complications/side effects.

Baseline comparisons

Table 13 shows comparisons of the baseline characteristics of women who chose each allocation method. There were small but statistically significant differences between the three groups on a number of these variables. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the distribution of mother’s age and gestational age at recruitment in the preference groups, and between randomised and preference groups. There was a statistically significant difference in the mean mothers’ ages in the three groups; while there was no difference between the preference arms, mean age was higher in the preference arms compared with the randomised arms by 1.2 years. Within the preference arms, the mean gestational age at recruitment (as determined by ultrasound) was 6 days longer for those women choosing STOP over MTOP. There was no significant difference in mean gestational age between the randomised and preference arms.

There was no significant difference in the proportion of women having a previous TOP between the three groups. Previous live-birth status was not recorded in 330 women. Further analysis indicated that this related to one nurse practitioner who had assumed leaving the field blank was the same as recording no prior live
Results

**TABLE 9  Recruitment rates: research nurses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research nurse/midwife</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Preference (%)</th>
<th>Randomised (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1085</td>
<td>81.9</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>80.7</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>80.7</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1877</td>
<td>81.4</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 10  Recruitment rates: nurse practitioners and other health professionals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health professional</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Preference (%)</th>
<th>Randomised (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NP1</td>
<td>814</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP2</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>82.7</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP3</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>85.2</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,877</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NP, nurse practitioner.
a Refers to one nurse practitioner who started late in the trial and two doctors who undertook a small number of clinics because of organisational needs.

**TABLE 11  Recruitment rates before and after strategy change**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Preference (%)</th>
<th>Randomised (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After</td>
<td>1243</td>
<td>80.9</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1877</td>
<td>81.4</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Birth. It was therefore assumed that these women had no previous live births. The percentage of women who had had previous live births did not differ significantly between the randomised and preference arms. However, in the preference arms there were a higher proportion of women (6%) in the surgical group who had had one or more previous live births.

The percentage of women who smoked did not differ significantly between the preference and randomised arms. However, there were more (7%) smokers in the surgical group of the preference arm than the medical group. There was little difference in educational attainment between the preference and randomised arms of the trial, but within the preference arms 7% more women were only educated up to GCSE level in the surgical group compared with the medical group.

The primary outcome (acceptability at 2 weeks after termination) was available on 74% of women who entered the trial. A further analysis was undertaken to determine whether those women who provided data on the primary outcome were typical of all women who had entered the trial. Table 14 shows the results of comparing baseline characteristics for those providing and not providing primary outcome data. It can be seen that any differences are small, the only statistically significant difference being that those on whom the primary outcome was available smoked slightly less.

**Primary outcome: acceptability**

**Two weeks after termination**

The results of the crude and unadjusted comparisons of acceptability between trial arms are shown in Table 15. There was a clear difference in
### TABLE 12 Stated reason(s) for preferred method of termination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Stated reason for preference</th>
<th>Reason 1</th>
<th>Reason 2</th>
<th>Medical</th>
<th>Surgical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Procedural</td>
<td>Fear of general anaesthesia/desire to be awake</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Desire to be asleep</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fear of needles</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dislike of taking tablets</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MTOP more ‘natural’</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fetus</td>
<td>Desire not to see/pass fetus</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Personal experience (of TOP or miscarriage/labour)</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other people’s experience</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time/stay</td>
<td>Minimum time in hospital</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minimum visits to hospital</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time to wait for procedure</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived ‘ease’/risk</td>
<td>‘Easier’/’better’ emotionally or psychologically</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fewer side effects/risks/complications</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less violent/’barbaric’/’traumatic’</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pain</td>
<td>Less painful</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Gestation</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contraception (wanted IUCD/implant)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other (e.g. confidentiality)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>1516</td>
<td>232</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IUCD, intrauterine contraceptive device.

### TABLE 13 Comparison of baseline characteristics of women who chose each TOP allocation method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preference</th>
<th>Medical ($n=786$)</th>
<th>Surgical ($n=657$)</th>
<th>Randomised ($n=328$)</th>
<th>$p$-value*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean age (years)</td>
<td>24.3 (SD 6.3)</td>
<td>24.9 (SD 6.2)</td>
<td>23.3 (SD 5.7)</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean gestational age (days)</td>
<td>57.4 (SD 12.6)</td>
<td>62.8 (SD 13.5)</td>
<td>59.7 (SD 13.0)</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No previous TOP (%)</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No previous live birth (%)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoke (%)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol (%)</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug use (%)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education up to GCSE level (%)</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support at home (%)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chlamydia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative (%)</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive (%)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown (%)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GCSE, General Certificate of Secondary Education; SD, standard deviation.

* $p$-values from ANOVA or chi-squared tests.

* $n=65$ unrecorded observations.

* $n=330$ unrecorded observations assumed to be no previous live birth.

* $n=9–18$ unrecorded observations for these variables.
Results

acceptability between STOP and MTOP: women in the surgical arms were more likely to opt to have the same method again compared with those having a medical termination (either within the preference or randomised arms). Women in the preference arms were slightly more likely to regard their TOP method as acceptable compared with randomised women.

For women in the preference arms the interaction between past TOP and preference arm was not statistically significant. There was a significant interaction between gestation and preference arm. This is illustrated in Figure 4a which shows the smoothed proportions in the two arms by gestational age. The difference in acceptability between preference arms increased with gestation, so the model estimated these differences at three different gestational ages, assuming a linear trend in gestation. However, for the comparisons of randomised arms, and the comparison of preference to randomised arms, there was no

\[ \text{FIGURE 2 Distribution of mothers’ ages (compared within preference arms and between combined preference and randomised arms).} \]

\[ \text{FIGURE 3 Distribution of gestational ages (at ultrasound compared within preference arms and between combined preference and randomised arms).} \]
TABLE 14  Comparison of baseline characteristics of women for whom outcome was available or missing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary outcome</th>
<th>Available (n = 1310)</th>
<th>Missing (n = 461)</th>
<th>p-valuea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean age (years)</td>
<td>24.5 (SD 6.2)</td>
<td>24.0 (SD 6.1)</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean gestational age (days)</td>
<td>59.5 (SD 13.2)</td>
<td>60.7 (SD 13.2)</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No previous TOPb (%)</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No previous live birthc (%)</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoked (%)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohold (%)</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug use (%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education up to GCSE leveld (%)</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support at homed (%)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GCSE, General Certificate of Secondary Education; SD, standard deviation.

a p-values from t-tests or chi-squared tests.
b n = 65 unrecorded observations.
c n = 330 unrecorded observations assumed to be no previous live birth.
d n = 9–18 unrecorded observations for these variables.

statistically significant interaction between trial arm and gestation (Figure 4b). The difference in acceptability was, therefore, estimated across all gestational ages.

Three months after termination

The crude and unadjusted comparisons of acceptability between trial arms at 3 months are shown in Table 15. The interactions between past TOP and trial arm, and between trial arm and gestational age were not statistically significant. Therefore, all comparisons were made across all gestations. There was still a clear difference in acceptability between STOP and MTOP at 3 months after the procedure; women in the surgical arms were more likely to opt to have the same method again (either within preference or within randomised arms). Women in the preference arms were slightly more likely to regard their TOP method as acceptable, but this difference was not statistically significant.

TABLE 15  Acceptability of procedure at 2 weeks after termination (i.e. percentage that would opt for same method again)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Crude difference</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>Adjusted differencea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PS (n = 488)</td>
<td>96.5%</td>
<td>15.7% (95% CI 12.0 to 19.2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM (n = 565)</td>
<td>80.9%</td>
<td>15.8% (95% CI 12.6 to 19.1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RS (n = 134)</td>
<td>94.0%</td>
<td>24.9% (95% CI 15.8 to 34.9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM (n = 123)</td>
<td>69.1%</td>
<td>6.0% (95% CI 0.9 to 11.1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preference combined (n = 1052)</td>
<td>88.1%</td>
<td>6.0% (95% CI 0.9 to 11.1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randomised combined (n = 257)</td>
<td>82.1%</td>
<td>8.2% (95% CI 2.9 to 13.4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Adjusted differences are estimated from a binary regression model adjusting for key baseline factors.
Results

Comparisons between results at 2 weeks and 3 months after termination

Characteristics of those who provided information
Far fewer women provided timely information on acceptability at 3 months post termination compared with that at 2 weeks. The subgroup of women who responded at 2 weeks was considered and split into those who did and did not respond at 3 months. It was found that those women who failed to respond at 3 months tended to be slightly younger (mean age 24.2 versus 25.1; \( p = 0.03 \)) and less well educated [57% versus 46% educated to General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) or less; \( p < 0.001 \)]. There was no significant difference between responders and non-responders on gestational age and numbers of previous terminations.

Changes in acceptability between 2 weeks and 3 months
There were only 382 women for whom timely information on acceptability was available at both 2 weeks and 3 months after TOP. Only 7% of responses had changed over time, and these are shown in Table 17. Overall, the proportion willing to have the same method again had reduced from 87.3% to 85.1%, a difference of 2.2% (95% CI –0.6 to 4.9).

Willingness to pay

A total of 1389 (91%) women in the preference arm completed the WTP scenario (761 requesting MTOP and 628 requesting STOP); 397 (28.6%) recorded zero (zero WTP group), while 93.8% of respondents were willing to pay up to £1000. There was no statistically significant difference in the mean WTP between women with a preference for MTOP compared to those with a preference for STOP whether or not zero payers were included (Table 18).

A total of 132 (37.5%) women in the randomised group completed the WTP scenario at 2 weeks, although 19 failed to state their choice of TOP method; 59 women (45.0%) recorded zero (zero WTP group), while 97.7% of respondents were willing to pay up to £1000. There was no

### TABLE 16 Acceptability of procedure at 3 months after termination (i.e. percentage that would opt for same method again)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Acceptability (%)</th>
<th>Crude difference</th>
<th>Adjusted difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PS (n = 135)</td>
<td>95.6%</td>
<td>16.6% (95% CI 9.8 to 23.4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM (n = 190)</td>
<td>79.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td>14.7% (95% CI 8.6 to 20.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RS (n = 42)</td>
<td>95.2%</td>
<td>25.8% (95% CI 9.4 to 42.2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM (n = 36)</td>
<td>69.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preference combined (n = 325)</td>
<td>85.9%</td>
<td>2.5% (95% CI –6.6 to 11.6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randomised combined (n = 78)</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>2.8% (95% CI –6.2 to 11.8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Adjusted differences are estimated from a binary regression model adjusting for key baseline factors.
### TABLE 17a  Comparison between acceptability at 2 weeks and 3 months after termination: all arms combined

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3 months: yes</th>
<th>3 months: no</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 weeks: yes</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 weeks: no</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 17b  Comparison between acceptability at 2 weeks and 3 months after termination: separately by trial arm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PM</th>
<th></th>
<th>PS</th>
<th></th>
<th>RM</th>
<th></th>
<th>RS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 months: yes</td>
<td>3 months: no</td>
<td>3 months: yes</td>
<td>3 months: no</td>
<td>3 months: yes</td>
<td>3 months: no</td>
<td>3 months: yes</td>
<td>3 months: no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 weeks: yes</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 weeks: no</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistically significant difference in the mean WTP between women with a future preference for MTOP compared to those with a future preference for STOP whether or not zero payers were included (Table 19).

\[ \text{Table 20 shows the mean WTP for a future TOP according to method of TOP to which women were randomised. Again there were no statistically significant differences between the groups. However, it is worth noting that WTP for switching choice of TOP method was consistently greater than the amount women were willing to pay to have the same method again; the differences for women randomised to MTOP were of borderline statistical significance.} \]

A total of 549 (35.9\%) women in the preference group completed the WTP scenario at 2 weeks (300 from the preference MTOP group and 249 from the preference STOP group), although 31 failed to state their choice of TOP method; 140 women (25.5\%) recorded zero (zero WTP group), while 96.7\% of respondents were willing to pay up to £1000. There was no difference in the mean WTP between women with a future preference for MTOP compared to those with a future preference for STOP whether or not zero payers were included (Table 21).

\[ \text{Table 22 shows the mean WTP for a future TOP according to the method of original preference. There were no statistically significant differences between the groups. As in the randomised group, WTP for switching choice was greater than the amount women were willing to pay to have the same TOP method again.} \]

### TABLE 18  Mean WTP for requested TOP method in preference group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Medical</th>
<th>Surgical</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>95% CI for mean difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Including zero payers</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>-113.12 to 55.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean WTP (£)</td>
<td>372.70 (SD 778.61)</td>
<td>431.85 (SD 855.23)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excluding zero payers</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>-184.72 to 44.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean WTP (£)</td>
<td>527.18 (SD 881.13)</td>
<td>597.36 (SD 955.65)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 19 Mean WTP for a future TOP method in randomised group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Medical</th>
<th>Surgical</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>95% CI for mean difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Including zero payers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean WTP (£)</td>
<td>192.86 (SD 248.23)</td>
<td>215.55 (SD 616.17)</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>–206.41 to 161.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excluding zero payers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean WTP (£)</td>
<td>295.31 (SD 253.33)</td>
<td>449.57 (SD 834.09)</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>–461.07 to 152.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SD, standard deviation.

### TABLE 20 Mean WTP for a future TOP according to original randomised group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of termination</th>
<th>Mean WTP (£) for future TOP preference</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>95% CI for mean difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Including zero payers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>Medical (n=42)</td>
<td>Surgical (n=19)</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>179.76 (SD 197.42)</td>
<td>482.63 (SD 1127.83)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgical</td>
<td>Medical (n=7)</td>
<td>Surgical (n=54)</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>271.43 (SD 467.13)</td>
<td>121.57 (SD 221.82)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excluding zero payers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>Medical (n=28)</td>
<td>Surgical (n=12)</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>269.64 (SD 184.52)</td>
<td>764.17 (SD 1358.96)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgical</td>
<td>Medical (n=4)</td>
<td>Surgical (n=54)</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>475.00 (SD 554.53)</td>
<td>285.43 (SD 263.90)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SD, standard deviation.

### TABLE 21 Mean WTP for future TOP method in preference group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Medical</th>
<th>Surgical</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>95% CI for mean difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Including zero payers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>291</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean WTP (£)</td>
<td>328.90 (SD 409.37)</td>
<td>357.47 (SD 538.12)</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>–113.12 to 55.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excluding zero payers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>211</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean WTP (£)</td>
<td>421.81 (SD 419.26)</td>
<td>493.01 (SD 576.85)</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>–173.62 to 31.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SD, standard deviation.
TABLE 22  Mean WTP for a future TOP method according to original preference group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of termination</th>
<th>Mean WTP (£) for future TOP preference</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>95% CI for mean difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Including zero payers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>Medical (n = 225)</td>
<td>321.16 (SD 408.56)</td>
<td>Surgical (n = 65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgical</td>
<td>Medical (n = 2)</td>
<td>750.00 (SD 353.55)</td>
<td>Surgical (n = 54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excluding zero payers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>Medical (n = 175)</td>
<td>418.06 (SD 419.32)</td>
<td>Surgical (n = 33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgical</td>
<td>Medical (n = 2)</td>
<td>750.00 (SD 353.55)</td>
<td>Surgical (n = 178)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SD, standard deviation.

Mean WTP for a future TOP was £341.80 [standard deviation (SD) 478.35] in the preference arm (n = 549) compared with £225.84 (SD 546.90) in the randomised arm (n = 131). This difference was statistically significant (mean £115.96; 95% CI 21.99 to 209.94; p = 0.016). Table 23 compares mean WTP for future TOP according to preferred method in the two trial arms. Women in the preference arm showed a consistently higher WTP for their choice of next TOP: for women preferring a future MTOP, those in the preference arm were prepared to pay an extra £136.04 (95% CI 16.33 to 255.75; p = 0.026); for women preferring a future STOP, those in the preference arm were prepared to pay an extra £141.93 (95% CI –0.82 to 284.67; p = 0.051).

Table 24 shows the mean WTP in each income band in the two arms of the trial. In both arms there were statistically significant differences between mean WTP in the different income groups [p < 0.0001 analysis of variance (ANOVA)]. There was a correlation between WTP and income in the preference arm (correlation coefficient 0.194, p < 0.0001) but not in the randomised arm.

Psychological rating scales at 2 weeks and 3 months after admission

The differences in the mean scores on the psychological rating scales between pairs of trial arms are shown in Table 25. Differences between groups were consistently small. The only statistically significant differences at either time point were a higher score in the IES intrusion subscale at 2 weeks after MTOP compared with STOP in both preference and randomised comparisons. At 3 months after termination, both avoidance and intrusion subscales of the IES were higher in the medical compared with the surgical arm in those women who had been randomised. These comparisons were not statistically significant in the preference arms.

TABLE 23  Mean WTP for future TOP method according to preferred method (in preference and randomised arms)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future preferred TOP method</th>
<th>Trial arm</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean WTP (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>Preference</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>328.90 (SD 409.36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Randomised</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>192.86 (SD 248.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgical</td>
<td>Preference</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>357.47 (SD 538.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Randomised</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>215.55 (SD 616.17)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SD, standard deviation.
TABLE 24  Relationship between stated income and WTP for future TOP method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stated income</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preference arm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£0</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>248.80 (SD 380.30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; £10,000</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>301.94 (SD 362.82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£10,000–£19,999</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>467.94 (SD 671.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£20,000–£30,000</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>347.44 (SD 370.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; £30,000</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>682.14 (SD 610.68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>341.80 (SD 478.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randomised arm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£0</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>124.39 (222.39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; £10,000</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>318.28 (550.74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£10,000–£19,999</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>137.93 (175.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£20,000–£30,000</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>181.67 (340.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; £30,000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1240.00 (2110.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>233.32 (558.64)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SD, standard deviation.

Satisfaction with care

This was reported on a 5-point scale (excellent to poor) and is summarised as the proportion of women who rated aspects of their care as excellent. Table 26 shows the comparisons of these percentages across trial arms. Women were more likely to be satisfied overall and with technical and interpersonal aspects of care if they had a surgical rather than medical termination. This was found in comparisons within preference arms and within randomised arms. There was no difference in satisfaction with waiting when comparing both within preference arms and randomised arms. None of the differences in satisfaction with care between combined preference and randomised arms were statistically significant.

Experience of care: semantic differential scales

Women rated their experience on 12 different scales defined by pairs of opposite adjectives. Scores could vary between -3 (most ‘negative’) to +3 (most ‘positive’). The distribution of these scores is compared between the two preference arms at 2 weeks after termination in Figure 5. The distributions were similar shapes in both arms for some scales (e.g. predominantly positive scores for ‘Dangerous–Safe’ indicating that most women found both procedures very safe), but quite different for other scales, e.g. Painful–Painless scores were predominantly negative (‘painful’) for women in the medical arm and predominantly positive (‘painless’) in the surgical arm.

Table 27 summarises these distributions by reporting the median scores for each pair of trial arms compared at 2 weeks. There was a significant difference in the distribution of scores between the two preference arms on all scales, and for all but one scale when the randomised arms were compared. In all cases, the experience of care had more responses towards the negative end of the scale in the medical compared with the surgical arms. No significant differences were found between the combined preference and randomised arms.

The information at 2 weeks after TOP was sought via postal questionnaires, clinic visits, telephone calls and online completion. Approximately half of the women provided information over the telephone and in these cases only six of the scales were used: these are the scales with the larger sample size. However, the nurses collecting information over the telephone found that women quite often requested clarification of the meaning of the ‘Passive–Active’ scale. For this semantic differential scale the distribution of responses was quite different (Figure 6) for women where responses were obtained by telephone compared with other routes. This was not the case for other scales. These results must, therefore, be interpreted with considerable caution, as they suggest that some women used the scale differently if they had the chance to clarify issues with researchers.

Table 28 compares the median semantic differential scores for the two preference arms at 3 months after termination. Although far fewer completed the questionnaire at this time point, the patterns are similar to those at 2 weeks. Those experiencing a surgical termination rated their experience of care more highly than those having a medical termination on all scales.

There was some interest in how the experience of care scores had changed between 2 weeks and 3 months for those women who had responded on both occasions. The distributions of the differences are shown in Figure 7. A positive difference indicates that the experience was less ‘positive’ at 3 months than at 2 weeks. It can be seen that while many women gave the same or very similar scores on the two occasions, others changed their scores
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological rating scale</th>
<th>Preference</th>
<th>Randomised</th>
<th>Preference vs randomised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medicala</td>
<td>Surgicalb</td>
<td>Difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IES avoidance</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>Crude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IES intrusive</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>Crude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IES total</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>Crude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAD depression</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Crude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAD anxiety</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>Crude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a IES n = 318, HAD n = 325.
b IES n = 276, HAD n = 281.
c IES n = 71, HAD n = 72.
d IES n = 71, HAD n = 71.
e Difference statistically significant at the 5% level.
### TABLE 25b  Comparison of mean scores on psychological rating scales between trial arms: 3 months after termination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological rating scale</th>
<th>Preference</th>
<th>Randomised</th>
<th>Preference vs randomised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medical(^a)</td>
<td>Surgical(^b)</td>
<td>Difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IES avoidance</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>Crude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IES intrusive</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>Crude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IES TOTAL</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>Crude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAD depression</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>Crude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAD anxiety</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>Crude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) IES \(n = 184\), HAD \(n = 183\).
\(^b\) IES \(n = 128\), HAD \(n = 127\).
\(^c\) IES \(n = 35\), HAD \(n = 35\).
\(^d\) IES \(n = 39\), HAD \(n = 40\).
\(^e\) Difference statistically significant at the 5% level.
TABLE 26a  Comparison of satisfaction scores between trial arms (percentage rating aspects of care as excellent): 2 weeks after termination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction scores</th>
<th>Preference</th>
<th>Medical (n = 492)</th>
<th>Surgical (n = 429)</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>Randomised</th>
<th>Medical (n = 112)</th>
<th>Surgical (n = 113)</th>
<th>Crude difference</th>
<th>Crude 95% CI</th>
<th>Preference vs randomised</th>
<th>P–R</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>Crude</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>–20.7a</td>
<td>–27.0 to –14.3</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>–17.3a</td>
<td>–30.2 to –4.5</td>
<td>Crude</td>
<td>–2.7</td>
<td>–9.9 to 4.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
<td>–21.3a</td>
<td>–27.8 to –14.8</td>
<td>–13.7a</td>
<td>–20.1 to –7.3</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>–11.0</td>
<td>–23.9 to 1.8</td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
<td>–6.0</td>
<td>–12.9 to 1.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>Crude</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>–13.7a</td>
<td>–20.2 to –7.3</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>–7.4</td>
<td>–19.7 to 4.9</td>
<td>Crude</td>
<td>–6.6</td>
<td>–13.6 to 0.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
<td>–15.1a</td>
<td>–21.5 to –8.7</td>
<td>–15.0a</td>
<td>–21.2 to –8.7</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>–2.4</td>
<td>–14.7 to 10.0</td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
<td>–8.2</td>
<td>–15.2 to –1.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>Crude</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>–15.0a</td>
<td>–21.2 to –8.7</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>–6.0</td>
<td>–28.0 to 16.1</td>
<td>Crude</td>
<td>–7.0</td>
<td>–19.3 to 5.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
<td>–15.1a</td>
<td>–21.5 to –8.7</td>
<td>–17.4a</td>
<td>–28.5 to –6.4</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>–25.0a</td>
<td>–46.5 to 3.5</td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
<td>–7.7</td>
<td>–20.1 to 4.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting</td>
<td>Crude</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>–5.3 to 7.1</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>–2.4</td>
<td>–14.7 to 10.0</td>
<td>Crude</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>–4.3 to 9.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
<td>–0.3</td>
<td>–6.6 to 7.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>–10.7</td>
<td>–31.0 to 9.5</td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>–8.0 to 14.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a  Difference statistically significant at the 5% level.

TABLE 26b  Comparison of satisfaction scores between trial arms (percentage rating aspects of care as excellent): 3 months after termination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction scores</th>
<th>Preference</th>
<th>Medical (n = 192)</th>
<th>Surgical (n = 132)</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>Randomised</th>
<th>Medical (n = 36)</th>
<th>Surgical (n = 42)</th>
<th>Crude difference</th>
<th>Crude 95% CI</th>
<th>Preference vs randomised</th>
<th>P–R</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>Crude</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>–22.9a</td>
<td>–33.5 to –12.3</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>–25.0a</td>
<td>–45.7 to –4.3</td>
<td>Crude</td>
<td>–2.0</td>
<td>–14.0 to 10.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
<td>–23.4a</td>
<td>–34.0 to –12.9</td>
<td>–25.3a</td>
<td>–36.0 to –14.6</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>–6.0</td>
<td>–28.0 to 16.1</td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
<td>–3.8</td>
<td>–16.1 to 8.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>Crude</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>–25.3a</td>
<td>–36.4 to –14.8</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>–5.0</td>
<td>–46.5 to 3.5</td>
<td>Crude</td>
<td>–7.0</td>
<td>–19.3 to 5.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
<td>–25.6a</td>
<td>–36.4 to –14.8</td>
<td>–17.2a</td>
<td>–28.1 to –6.3</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>–25.0a</td>
<td>–46.5 to 3.5</td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
<td>–7.7</td>
<td>–20.1 to 4.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>Crude</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>–17.4a</td>
<td>–28.5 to –6.4</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>–25.0a</td>
<td>–46.5 to 3.5</td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
<td>–7.0</td>
<td>–19.3 to 5.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
<td>–17.4a</td>
<td>–28.5 to –6.4</td>
<td>–7.9 to 13.1</td>
<td>–10.5 to 10.8</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>–10.7</td>
<td>–31.0 to 9.5</td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>–8.0 to 14.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting</td>
<td>Crude</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>–7.9 to 13.1</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>–10.7</td>
<td>–31.0 to 9.5</td>
<td>Crude</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>–7.9 to 15.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>–10.5 to 10.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>–10.7</td>
<td>–31.0 to 9.5</td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>–8.0 to 14.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a  Difference statistically significant at the 5% level.
considerably (in both directions). One scale which had fewer women reporting the same score on both occasions was ‘Passive–Active’: this may be due to the fact that data were collected by telephone on 49% of women at 2 weeks, but on only 1% at 3 months, and the distribution of responses varied with the data collection method.

### Symptoms during admission and 2 weeks after termination

Women were questioned about symptoms and pain they experienced during admission, and then again at 2 weeks after the procedure. The results are shown in Table 29. During admission, in the preference arms, there was a statistically significant difference for all symptoms, with a higher percentage of women reporting symptoms and higher mean pain scores during MTOP than STOP. The differences were largest for nausea, vomiting and pain. The same differences were seen in the randomised arm with the exception of dizziness (where only one woman reported this symptom in the medical group). There were no significant differences in symptoms between the preference and randomised arms during admission.

At the 2-week follow-up the only significant difference between the preference arms was the percentage of women reporting diarrhoea, which was again higher in the MTOP group. In the randomised arms more women reported nausea and diarrhoea after medical termination. There were no significant differences between the two combined arms (preference and randomised) at 2-week follow-up.

Table 30 shows the amount of bleeding experienced after discharge as reported at the 2-week follow-up. Compared with STOP, women had more bleeding after a medical procedure in both the preference and randomised arms. The difference in the distribution of amount of bleeding in the preference arms is illustrated in Figure 8. There was no significant difference in the amount of bleeding between women in the randomised and preference arms.

### Time taken to return to work and normal activity

There were 255 unemployed women who were not included in the analysis of time taken to return to work. Table 31 shows that there were no differences in the distributions between groups undergoing medical and surgical termination in either the preference or the randomised arms. However, there was a significant difference between preference and randomised arms, with slightly more women returning to work immediately in the randomised arm (Figure 9).

Table 32 shows that the time taken to return to normal activity was very similar to time taken to return to work, with no significant differences in the distributions between medical and surgical groups in either arm. Again, the difference in distribution between the randomised and preference arms was statistically significant, with more women in the randomised arm reporting an immediate return to normal activity (Figure 10).

There were no differences in percentage of women returning to work and normal activity by 2 weeks.
### TABLE 27  Comparison of median semantic differential scores between trial arms at 2 weeks (number of women in parentheses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantic differential</th>
<th>Preference</th>
<th>Randomised</th>
<th>Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>Surgical</td>
<td>p-value*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpleasant–Pleasant</td>
<td>–2 (320)</td>
<td>0 (274)</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreeable–Attractive</td>
<td>–2 (317)</td>
<td>0 (272)</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad–Happy</td>
<td>–1 (324)</td>
<td>0 (278)</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard–Easy</td>
<td>–1 (485)</td>
<td>1 (424)</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painful–Painless</td>
<td>–1 (487)</td>
<td>1 (428)</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive–Active</td>
<td>0 (467)</td>
<td>1 (415)</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad–Good</td>
<td>0 (317)</td>
<td>1 (274)</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative–Positive</td>
<td>0 (314)</td>
<td>1 (276)</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harsh–Mild</td>
<td>0 (482)</td>
<td>2 (420)</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreeable–Agreeable</td>
<td>0 (315)</td>
<td>2 (271)</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow–Fast</td>
<td>1 (486)</td>
<td>2 (427)</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dangerous–Safe</td>
<td>2 (487)</td>
<td>3 (426)</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p-value from Mann–Whitney test.
between medical and surgical groups in the preference arm, or between the preference and randomised arms (Table 33).

**Clinical effectiveness**

**Unplanned or emergency admission**

A total of 63 women had a procedure-related admission (Table 34). In 16 cases this was ‘planned’, i.e. anticipated, and in most cases this was because of a lack of support/supervision at home for the night after the TOP; 33 women had an unplanned admission on the day of the TOP. In most cases this was an overnight stay because of late passage of products of conception, symptoms or complications. Six women were readmitted as an emergency after their initial discharge, mostly because of RPC.

Table 35 shows a comparison of planned and unplanned admissions/overnight stays in the two arms of the trial. There were no differences in planned admissions between women undergoing MTOP and STOP. However, more women having an MTOP had an unplanned admission. This difference was statistically significant in both the randomised and preference arms.

**Complications**

All women who entered into the trial have been included in the reporting of complications. A total of 72 women experienced complications as a result of the termination, including one woman who was also categorised as a serious adverse event (SAE). Eleven of the women who experienced complications subsequently withdrew from the trial.

A breakdown of complications by trial arm is given in Table 36. In the preference group the percentage of women experiencing complications was 2.4% higher in the group undergoing MTOP. This pattern was also seen in the randomised arms, but the difference was not statistically significant.

Table 37 provides a detailed list of complications. A total of 48 women had a clinical diagnosis of RPC, two associated with haemorrhage; 28 presented as an emergency after discharge from hospital (with vaginal bleeding with or without abdominal pain), four had RPC diagnosed at the 2-week outpatient review and 16 were kept in hospital overnight because of failure to pass ‘complete’ products. Of the 48 women with suspected RPC, 34 had an evacuation under general anaesthesia (26 in the emergency admission group and 8 in the overnight stay group), eight had products of conception removed from the cervix/vagina (with a subsequent scan suggesting no additional intrauterine products of conception), four were managed medically (with misoprostol) and two were managed expectantly. In those cases managed medically or expectantly an ultrasound scan subsequently showed no intrauterine products of conception.

Fifteen women experienced haemorrhage during their initial admission (including the SAE case), of whom four received a blood transfusion. Eleven women were suspected of intrauterine infection, five with evidence of RPC. All were admitted as an emergency with vaginal bleeding with or without abdominal pain. Two women had a failed MTOP; one had a subsequent STOP and the other had a subsequent successful MTOP. One woman had a failed STOP; products of conception were not identified at operation and a subsequent ultrasound scan showed a viable pregnancy. The
TABLE 28 Comparison of median semantic differential scores between preference arms at 3 months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantic differential</th>
<th>Preference</th>
<th>Randomised</th>
<th>Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medical (n = 191)</td>
<td>Surgical (n = 132)</td>
<td>(p)-value(^b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpleasant–Pleasant</td>
<td>–2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreeable–Attractive</td>
<td>–1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad–Happy</td>
<td>–1.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard–Easy</td>
<td>–1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painful–Painless</td>
<td>–1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive–Active</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad–Good</td>
<td>–1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative–Positive</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harsh–Mild</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreeable–Agreeable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow–Fast</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dangerous–Safe</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Up to 13 extra missing values for some scales in the preference arms and up to three in the randomised arms.

\(^b\) \(p\)-value from Mann–Whitney test.
Unpleasant–Pleasant scale – 2 weeks to 3 months difference

Unattractive–Attractive – 2 weeks to 3 months difference

Sad–Happy scale – 2 weeks to 3 months difference

Hard–Easy scale – 2 weeks to 3 months difference

Painful–Painless scale – 2 weeks to 3 months difference

Passive–Active scale – 2 weeks to 3 months difference

Bad–Good scale – 2 weeks to 3 months difference

Negative–Positive scale – 2 weeks to 3 months difference

Harsh–Mild scale – 2 weeks to 3 months difference

Disagreeable–Agreeable scale – 2 weeks to 3 months difference
Results

There were three cases of uterine trauma: two cervical lacerations at STOP that required suturing and one uterine perforation (see SAE below).

It might be expected that women experiencing complications may find the method of TOP less acceptable. Table 38 shows the acceptability (would women opt for the same method again) at 2 weeks and 3 months after the procedure for those who had and had not experienced a complication. Acceptability was much lower for those women experiencing a complication. The difference is even greater at 3 months than 2 weeks, though based on far fewer responses. In fact, of the 21 women who gave a timely response on both occasions, seven said ‘yes’ both times, seven said ‘no’ both times, and seven changed their response from ‘yes’ to ‘no’.

Serious adverse events

There was one SAE during the trial. A 29-year-old woman who had previously had a loop electrosurgical excision procedure was admitted for STOP at 9+3 weeks of pregnancy (preference arm). She received misoprostol (400 µg) to prime the cervix. At operation the cervix could not be dilated and a decision was made to convert to MTOP. Mifepristone (200 mg) was given and the patient returned 2 days later for misoprostol (800 µg vaginally). She received a further three doses of misoprostol (400 µg) orally that day and then five doses of gemeprost (1 mg vaginally) the following day without passage of products of conception. The patient opted to go home and return for a second attempt at STOP 2 days later. At operation the cervix was dilated sufficiently to allow a 9-mm suction curettage. Following evacuation of products of conception there was significant haemorrhage. Laparoscopy confirmed a haemoperitoneum and at laparotomy the cervix was found to be almost completely separated from the uterine body. A hysterectomy was performed and a small defect in the bladder was repaired. The patient was transfused 2 units of blood. Postoperatively a ureteric injury was suspected because of a watery vaginal loss and confirmed with an intravenous urogram. The patient was taken back to theatre 3 days after the initial laparotomy where a cystoscopy and retrograde pyelogram identified a right uretero-peritoneal leak. A further laparotomy was therefore performed and the right ureter reimplanted. Subsequent postoperative progress was uneventful.

Costs

Standard costs

Clinic attendance costs are shown in Table 39. These were assumed to be the same for women having MTOP and STOP. The additional standard costs for MTOP and STOP are shown in Tables 40 and 41. The total standard costs for MTOP and STOP were £261.37 and £489.91 respectively.

Individual-level unit costs

Individual-level unit costs and resource usage based on method of TOP and in the two arms of the trial are shown in Appendices 3 and 4 respectively.

Total cost

Total costs for each TOP method and for women assigned to the randomised and preference arms
### TABLE 29  Symptoms experienced during and after TOP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom</th>
<th>Preference</th>
<th>Randomised</th>
<th>Preference vs randomised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>Surgical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>During admission for TOP</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nausea (%)</td>
<td>1251</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dizziness (%)</td>
<td>1261</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diarrhoea (%)</td>
<td>1418</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vomiting (%)</td>
<td>1420</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean VAS pain score</td>
<td>1322</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>During 2 weeks after TOP</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nausea (%)</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dizziness (%)</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diarrhoea (%)</td>
<td>906</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vomiting (%)</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still bleeding at 2 weeks (%)</td>
<td>884</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean VAS pain score</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**VAS, visual analogue scale.**
- a. Number of women responding to this question in preference arms.
- b. Number of women responding to this question in randomised arms.
- c. Difference statistically significant at the 5% level.
**TABLE 30** Bleeding after discharge (as reported at 2-week follow-up)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Excessive (%)</th>
<th>Heavy (%)</th>
<th>Moderate (%)</th>
<th>Minimal (%)</th>
<th>None (%)</th>
<th>p-value*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preference</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgical</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Randomised</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgical</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Combined</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preference</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randomised</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a p-value from Mann–Whitney test.

**FIGURE 8** Amount of vaginal bleeding after TOP as reported at 2 weeks.

**TABLE 31** Distribution of time (days) taken to return to work between trial groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>p-value*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preference</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0–63</td>
<td>0.484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgical</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0–33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Randomised</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1–23</td>
<td>0.940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgical</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0–47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Combined</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preference</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0–63</td>
<td>0.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randomised</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0–47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a p-value from Mann–Whitney test.
**FIGURE 9** Distribution of days taken to return to work.

**TABLE 32** Distribution of time (days) taken to return to normal activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>arm</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>p-value&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preference</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surgical</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0–37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randomised</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0–32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surgical</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0–18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trial arm</td>
<td>Preference</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0–63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Randomised</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0–32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> p-value from Mann-Whitney test.

**FIGURE 10** Distribution of days taken to return to normal activity.
### TABLE 33  Percentage of women who had returned to work/normal activity by 2-week follow-up between trial groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Preference</th>
<th>Randomised</th>
<th>Preference vs randomised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n(^a)</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>Surgical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned to work</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>91.5</td>
<td>88.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned to normal activity</td>
<td>922</td>
<td>93.9</td>
<td>93.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Number of women responding to this question in the preference arms.

\(^b\) Number of women responding to this question in the randomised arms.
TABLE 34 TOP-related admissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Admissions</th>
<th>Randomised</th>
<th>Preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surgical</td>
<td>Medical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Surgical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Medical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned overnight stay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cervical priming</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical (non-gynaecological) problem</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total planned</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unplanned overnight stay (during initial admission)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complications</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained products of conception</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haemorrhage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed MTOP</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aborted following day after additional cervagem</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products of conception passed late on day of admission</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate/heavy vaginal bleeding</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vomiting</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unplanned overnight stay (following emergency admission)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total unplanned</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a No support at home.
b Indications for stay were infection (n = 1), RPC and evacuation of RPC (n = 1) in PS group, and RPC and evacuation of RPC (n = 3) or medical management (n = 1) in PM group.

TABLE 35 Percentage of women experiencing a planned and unplanned admission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Admissions</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Per cent (n) admitted</th>
<th>Difference (95% CI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planned admissions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>0.5 (4)</td>
<td>−0.8 (−1.7 to 0.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgical</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>1.3 (9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randomised</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>−0.4 (−0.9 to 0.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgical</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>0.4 (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unplanned admissions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>4.5 (37)</td>
<td>3.6 (2.1 to 5.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgical</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>0.9 (6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randomised</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>0.5 (4)</td>
<td>0.5 (0.01 to 1.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgical</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results

**TABLE 36** Percentage of women experiencing complications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preference</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Per cent experiencing complications</th>
<th>Difference (95% CI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>2.4 (0.5 to 4.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgical</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randomised</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgical</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 37** Complications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complication</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Haemorrhage(^a)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained products of conception(^b)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>63.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infection</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uterine trauma</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Three women also had other complications: two with RPC and one with RPC and infection.

\(^b\) Five women also had infection.

**TABLE 38** Acceptability of procedure for those experiencing or not experiencing complications (at 2 weeks and 3 months after termination)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complications at 2 weeks</th>
<th>No (n = 1252)</th>
<th>Acceptability 88.3(^a)</th>
<th>Crude difference 29.6% (95% CI 16.8 to 42.4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes (n = 58)</td>
<td>Acceptability 58.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complications at 3 months</th>
<th>No (n = 381)</th>
<th>Acceptability 88.5%</th>
<th>Crude difference 56.6% (95% CI 36.9 to 76.4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes (n = 22)</td>
<td>Acceptability 31.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Percentage of women who would opt for the same method again.

Are shown in Table 42. MTOP is cheaper than STOP primarily due to the lower standard costs.

**Cost-effectiveness analysis**

The ICERs in the two arms of the trial are shown in Table 43. To gain one more successful TOP (i.e. an uncomplicated TOP without the need for an unplanned admission) cost more with a surgical procedure in both arms of the trial.

**Discrete choice experiment**

A total of 310 women attending 58 CoSH clinics were approached by the research nurse (average of 5.3 per session, range 0–10). We recruited up to the point where 100 women agreed to participate; 210 declined to take part. The characteristics of the study group are shown in Table 44.

Table 45 shows the results from the regression analysis. Four of the five attributes had coefficients
### TABLE 39 Clinical attendance costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Grade/source</th>
<th>Unit cost (£) 2007–8 prices</th>
<th>Quantity per individual</th>
<th>Cost (£) excluding overheads</th>
<th>Cost (£) including overheads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse practitioner</td>
<td>NHS Band 7</td>
<td>0.727</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19.27</td>
<td>24.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outpatient nurse</td>
<td>NHS Band 3</td>
<td>0.274</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7.25</td>
<td>9.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phlebotomist</td>
<td>NHS Band 2</td>
<td>0.246</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>4.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other inputs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultrasound scan</td>
<td>NHS Trust</td>
<td>66.48</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>66.48</td>
<td>85.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Chlamydia</em> screen</td>
<td>NHS Trust</td>
<td>14.23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14.23</td>
<td>18.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full blood count</td>
<td>NHS Trust</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haemoglobinopathy screen</td>
<td>NHS Trust</td>
<td>18.58</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18.58</td>
<td>23.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>168.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 40 Additional costs for MTOP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Unit cost (£) 2007–8 prices</th>
<th>Quantity per individual</th>
<th>Cost (£) excluding overheads</th>
<th>Cost (£) including overheads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mifepristone</td>
<td>BNF</td>
<td>13.94</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13.94</td>
<td>13.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff (all)</td>
<td>NHS Trust</td>
<td>58.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>58.00</td>
<td>74.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misoprostol (800µg)</td>
<td>BNF</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doxycycline (200mg)&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>BNF</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>3.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>92.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BNF, British National Formulary.

<sup>a</sup> Seven-day course.

### TABLE 41 Additional costs for STOP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Unit cost (£) 2007–8 prices</th>
<th>Quantity per individual</th>
<th>Cost (£) excluding overheads</th>
<th>Cost (£) including overheads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff (excluding those involved in operation)</strong></td>
<td>NHS Trust</td>
<td>58.00</td>
<td>0.843&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>48.91</td>
<td>62.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misoprostol (400µg)</td>
<td>BNF</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operation&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</strong></td>
<td>NHS Trust</td>
<td>9.92</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>198.35</td>
<td>198.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgeon</td>
<td>MC5605</td>
<td>100.683</td>
<td>0.00021</td>
<td>20.98</td>
<td>26.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anaesthetist</td>
<td>MC5605</td>
<td>100.683</td>
<td>0.00021</td>
<td>20.98</td>
<td>26.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doxycycline (200mg)&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>BNF</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>3.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metronidazole (1g)</td>
<td>BNF</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>2.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>321.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Correction to allow for reduced mean length of time on ward compared with MTOP cases (380 min vs 451 min, \( p < 0.001 \)).

<sup>b</sup> Cost per minute.

<sup>c</sup> Seven-day course.
### TABLE 42 Total costs for MTOP and STOP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total costs (£)</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>Surgical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole sample</td>
<td>287.78 (n = 940)</td>
<td>498.12 (n = 831)</td>
<td>210.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randomised arm</td>
<td>287.04 (n = 174)</td>
<td>496.71 (n = 174)</td>
<td>209.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preference arm</td>
<td>287.93 (n = 766)</td>
<td>498.48 (n = 657)</td>
<td>210.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 43 Incremental cost-effectiveness ratio (ICER)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean cost (£)</th>
<th>Mean effect</th>
<th>ICER (£)</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preference arm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTOP</td>
<td>287.93</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>12,959.10</td>
<td>6458.39 to 54,613.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STOP</td>
<td>498.48</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randomised arm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTOP</td>
<td>287.04</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>7979.60</td>
<td>4187.67 to 34,882.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STOP</td>
<td>496.71</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 44 Characteristics of DCE study group (n = 100)

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean age (years)</td>
<td>25.1 (SD 7.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stated income level (n)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zero</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; £10,000</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£10,000–£19,999</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£20,000–£30,000</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; £30,000</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status (n)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single no partner</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single with partner</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married/living with partner</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum level of educational qualification (n)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No qualification</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCSE</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Levels</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher degree</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GCSE, General Certificate of Secondary Education; SD, standard deviation.
TABLE 45  Regression results for the DCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute (interpretation)</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>z</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conscious (prefer to be unconscious)</td>
<td>-0.0999</td>
<td>0.0384</td>
<td>-2.6</td>
<td>0.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling (prefer access to counselling)</td>
<td>0.4298</td>
<td>0.0382</td>
<td>11.24</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days delay (prefer 7 days to 14 days)</td>
<td>0.4842</td>
<td>0.0384</td>
<td>12.62</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analgesics</td>
<td>-0.0409</td>
<td>0.0383</td>
<td>-1.07</td>
<td>0.286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overnight stay (prefer no overnight stay)</td>
<td>-0.04424</td>
<td>0.0389</td>
<td>-11.37</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.00461</td>
<td>0.0380</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.904</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SE, standard error.

TABLE 46  Marginal rate of substitution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute gain</th>
<th>Additional days wait to termination for attribute gain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conscious during termination</td>
<td>0.0999/0.4842 = 0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling provided</td>
<td>0.4298/0.4842 = 0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overnight stay avoided</td>
<td>0.4424/0.4842 = 0.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

that were statistically significantly different from zero; only the need for analgesics was not statistically significant. Based on the size of the regression coefficients, three attributes had an almost equal impact on women’s preferences: the provision of counselling, the number of days’ delay to the procedure and the possibility of the need for an overnight stay. Being conscious or not had a lesser impact on women’s preferences.

We were also interested in the number of additional days that women were prepared to wait (trade-off or MRS between waiting and the other significant service attributes) for the termination procedure (Table 46). Women would be prepared to wait approximately one extra day to ensure access to post-termination counselling and to avoid an overnight stay following a termination.
Recruitment

Of the 69 who were referred, 41 initially consented when contacted by the researcher and altogether 30 women from the PS (n = 11), PM (n = 9), RS (n = 6) and RM (n = 4) arms of the trial were interviewed. Of those who were not interviewed, 14 gave no reply, six declined, three hung up, one moved house, and six postponed or did not attend and did not reply or hung up on further telephone calls. Letters were written to two women who had not provided a telephone number. A further nine who had been referred were not followed up because numbers had been met in the respective arms of the trial. An interval of at least 5 weeks was given between the procedure and the interview date and no interviews were carried out more than 18 weeks after the procedure. Difficulties in recruitment in the random arms of the trial are reflected in the numbers recruited onto the substudy.

Interviewee and non-interviewee characteristics

The characteristics of the substudy group are shown in Table 47. The mean age of participants was 24.7 (range 16–38) years. Two-thirds (n = 21) were educated to A-level standard and above, and two-thirds were employed. Of the nine who were married and cohabiting, six had previous live births, while among the 20 who were single, five had previous live births. Five women had had a previous TOP. In comparison, the mean age of non-participants was 23.4 years. Two-fifths had educational qualifications of ‘A’ levels and above, and half were employed. Just under half had previous live births, but only one-sixth were married or cohabiting. Those who were interviewed thus tended to be older, more educated, in a long-term relationship, and more likely to be in paid work.

Of the women who opted for the preference arm of the trial, 4 of 20 were less than 9 weeks’ gestation, compared with 7 of 10 in the randomised arm. Of 17 women who had a surgical termination, eight had live births, compared with 3 of 13 who had a medical termination. They also tended to be older (mean age 25.5 versus 23.7 years). Of the 30 women, two were asylum-seekers, two were British Asians, and two were economic migrants from Africa and the EU.

Experiences and understandings of the trial

Women’s reasons and motivations for seeking TOP were not within the remit of this study, although they were sometimes revealed in the course of the interviews. Access to TOP is an important policy topic, and one about which there are significant political and moral debates, but in this study women tended to describe their experiences of seeking TOP in mainly procedural terms.

Of the 30 women in the substudy, 23 approached their family doctor in the first instance to arrange for a termination. At the first point of contact with primary care to seek TOP, most women did not describe explicit obstacles to referral. Only one participant encountered a doctor who declined to refer her for TOP on grounds of conscience. However, 10 of 30 did experience difficulties that they characterised as related to being adequately informed about the treatment options available to them. Information available to them in primary care was variable: some general practices provided written information, while others referred women to information available at the hospital.

Women’s response to uneven provision of information varied. Some were dissatisfied, but others felt that they were not in a position to process detailed information about referral and treatment options because of its psychosocial impact on them. For example, one participant told us that:

I don’t think I could have dealt with knowing everything there and then...because I didn’t want to have the information that day. I just, I was having enough problems dealing with everything, I didn’t want to have it in black and white in front of me (5132 RS).

It is now well established that women seeking help for reproductive health problems have a
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>MTOP (n = 13)</th>
<th>STOP (n = 17)</th>
<th>All (n = 30)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 and below</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22–30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCSE</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A level</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First degree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unassigned</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; £10,000</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£10,000–£20,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; £20,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partner status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unassigned</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20 (67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabiting</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gestation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–8 weeks</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9–11 weeks</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17 (57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12–14 weeks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Previous live births</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unassigned</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 or more</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Previous TOP</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25 (83%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GCSE, General Certificate of Secondary Education.

preference to consult female professionals,64 and in this study participants indicated that encounters with male doctors took on a greater formality, while their female counterparts seemed to be more empathic. Women seemed also to experience greater satisfaction with services provided by family planning clinics. Seven women initially sought TOP through a family planning clinic. Two of the women who had initially sought TOP through general practice subsequently moved on to a family planning clinic, one because she was uncertain about whether TOP was appropriate, and the other because of change in area of residence. Onward referral to the hospital service from family planning clinic could be accomplished swiftly and without complication. However, referral
from general practice imposed a further burden on women, who had to take on additional coordinating work to chase up appointments and referrals with local administrative staff.

Because of their area of residence, four women had a choice of hospital. Their decisions were based mainly on the earliest appointment available rather than distance, and one was advised by the family planning clinic to have it at the RVI because they were uncertain about how many weeks pregnant she was and her local hospital had stricter limits on gestational age. The normal waiting time between referral and appointment at the hospital was 14 days, with around 7 days between assessment and the actual procedure. The shortest waiting time recorded was 2 days between seeking TOP and hospital assessment, with a further 2-day wait for the procedure. However, 11 of 30 women waited more than 14 days to be referred, and one (an asylum-seeker) waited more than 21 days. Delays for women occurred at the referral stage, with pregnancy testing sometimes holding up a referral. However, two women started the medical procedure at their first visit to the RVI after they were assessed. In some cases delays were due to women being unable to keep an appointment or requiring counselling before the procedure. Once women were referred to the hospital, some had trouble locating the clinic and were reluctant to ask for directions, suggesting a degree of stigma attached to attending the TOP clinic. The assessment clinic could be a busy place; two women felt that there were a lot of people to see in one day, and for another two the clinic felt rushed as one was ‘bundled off in different directions’.

The literature suggests that women’s decisions to seek TOP are pragmatic ones and that women prefer rapid access to services characterised by supportive non-judgemental staff. We cannot make confident claims about participants’ reasons for seeking TOP, but qualitative data suggest that empathic service provision in primary care was preferred by them. In this case, women’s accounts of help-seeking were largely procedural, and factors that shaped this were primarily related to organisational processes.

Experiences of trial participation itself were dominated by accounts of (1) the clinical procedure and its contexts and (2) data collection. Like participants in other clinical trials, participants in the TOPS trial accounted for their involvement through the notion of ‘helping’ in some way. They made reference to the benefits of medical research and women’s experiences that triggered the desire to help. They also reflected on abortion as an unpalatable and painful experience that was somehow compensated for by research participation. All except one of the women made references to the idea of ‘helping’ in some form or other as their reason for being involved. Altruistic involvement was the most common feature of accounts of motivation and half of the participants in the substudy described their involvement in this way. For example, one younger respondent said that:

I just feel though...as though it is a good thing because if it helps other people that’s why when I was talking to me family about it they were saying ‘Ah but what you doing it for?’ and I was, like, well if it’s going to benefit somebody else then, well, that’s all that matters really (3618 RS).

Eight women expressed their reason for volunteering as having to do with the important role of research as contributing to knowledge. Other women asserted an ethical obligation to help:

With a study like that I mean it, it...there’s only certain people obviously that are suitable to take part in a study like that, people that are pregnant and are having a termination and you know a lot of people I think wouldn’t be prepared to talk about it and wouldn’t be prepared to participate in this study and since I, you know, I felt OK about it then I thought well you know, I should, I should do it (4062 PS).

Other women reflected on the pain of their experiences and their empathy with women in the same position as being the trigger for volunteering:

It’s a horrible situation where you are going into something that you don’t know anything about and you don’t even know which method would be best for you, so I think it would be better if people did know which would be better so (4564 RM).

Because this was a partial preference trial, participants had three possible pathways through it. They could (1) choose (prefer) STOP, (2) choose (prefer) MTOP, or (3) choose to be allocated to one of the randomised arms of the trial. At enrolment into the trial the question of randomisation posed a problem for participants. Some women had difficulty deciding a preference:
When I was sitting in the room with, like, the lady and she was saying we can do it for you on the computer and just pick a random if you want to be part of that study and things, I was just kind like ‘Urgh! I don’t know, I don’t know’ but I eventually picked medical (4304 PM).

On the other hand, the process of randomisation was also described as a solution to problems of decision:

About each, er, each method and what it involves and I just thought there was so many pros and cons of each one that I really couldn’t decide which one would be better for me and then when I was told about the, the research that you were doing I just thought it would be better seeing as I couldn’t personally decide anyway ‘cos I just thought each method had good and bad points, I just thought it would be better to do the research (4564 RM).

Although women who had a preference should not have entered the randomisation arms of the trial, they often sought to oblige staff by offering to do so:

I asked the researcher, I said ‘Well you know, can I do the random thing, and then if it comes up as a surgical can I change my mind?’ and she went ‘No, if you’ve got a preference that’s the one you’ve got to have’… Because I’d already stated that I had a preference she couldn’t just put me in the random thing because she already knew that I already had a preference (4336 PM).

Participation in follow-up data collection meant that women had to revisit what they perceived as an essentially private experience. Some women had the opportunity to come back into the hospital for the 2-week follow-up. The contingencies of everyday health care meant that the circumstances in which this took place were not always ideal:

Er, and then there was another girl there as well and she sort of said ‘You know, will you do it together?’ and I’ve never met this girl and we both said ‘No’ and then she put me in the same room where I’d had all my scan and everything, which was really unpleasant and I think if I’d been prepared for that it would have been OK but I’d been expecting to see T, in the cosy room you know (4062 PS).

More than one-third ($n = 13$) thought that the questions they had to answer were easy. However, there were some difficulties with the length of the questionnaire and the scale questions:

Some things I didn’t really understand like, just the, er, when they have numbers like from zero and then going up.

Interviewer: It’s a scale isn’t it?

Yeah and it’s like, some of the words don’t really make sense, and for me I would have to elaborate or write something underneath, because it doesn’t.

Interviewer: Did you do that though?

Em, on some of them, yeah, because I just thought it just doesn’t make sense (4760 RM).

A small number of participants attributed benefits to participating in the study that either stemmed from feeling that they were ‘not alone’ in their experience or because they found the experience in some way cathartic. More generally, women were appreciative of approaches to informed consent that enabled understanding and provided opportunities for questions to be asked. However, there are some indications that the time scale of recruitment and maintaining the right balance of information are issues to be addressed in future research.

It is unsurprising that women’s accounts of their understanding of the research itself centred on decision-making between MTOP and STOP. However, they referred mainly to the study providing some objective evaluation of the two procedures, rather than discovering women’s subjective preferences. Over one-third of the women referred to finding out women’s preference for a particular method, with one interviewee referring to statistical approaches. One-third of the women spoke about the research in terms of effectiveness, that is, which method was ‘best’ or ‘better’, which method was ‘best in the long term’, and which was safer. However, participants also referred to the improvement of services for women, focusing on improving care during and after the procedure, making women more ‘comfortable’ and reducing the ‘emotional strain’ of the procedure.

A small number of participants also referred to the trial more specifically as being able to assist in women’s choices:
I guess you're trying to, er, trying to see whether it actually has an impact on people physically and psychologically to do the kind of well being after the event depending on which, which method they go for because I suppose the NHS the medical, er, the medical way would actually be cheaper, more efficient and if it doesn’t have, you know, any poorer implications compared to the surgical method then that’s going to be something that is possibly advocated more and you use that to help people make decisions I suppose (4648 PS).

Participants framed the benefits of involvement in the trial in altruistic terms, but also saw a cathartic effect in talking about their experiences. Only three participants did not describe such a benefit from being involved in the trial.

**Decision-making and preferences**

This study was not concerned with the processes which led women to seek a termination in the first place. However, because it was a partial preference trial, the means by which women decided on their preferences were important. The substudy interviews provided accounts of how past experiences of both childbirth and surgical procedures shaped women’s decision-making. In deciding between medical and surgical procedures, only a few women in the substudy referred to advice from professionals as an influencing factor in making their choice.

Similarly, four women in the substudy were concerned about what was involved in the surgical procedure. In their accounts of surgery, the women used terms such as ‘dangerous’, ‘risky’, ‘brutal’, ‘horrible’, ‘serious’, ‘harsh’ and ‘invasive’. A participant in the PS arm of the trial referred to it as ‘being under the knife’ but felt that it needed to be called something else ‘as it didn’t require any stitches’. A participant in the RM arm of the trial, on the other hand, referred to the ‘tools and things’ that had to be used in the procedure. Another PS participant had to put aside the idea of ‘flushing away something that would be human’, or it would have changed her mind about having a surgical termination. Concerns about general anaesthesia may have led some women to enter the PM arm of the trial, either because of assessment of ‘potential’ risks or previous experiences. Other women spoke of a more general fear of surgery – not knowing what to expect, and how their bodies would react. Three women described anxiety about injections, in the form of a ‘fear of needles’, and two of these opted for medical termination. A participant in the PM arm of the trial described this anxiety thus:

I was a bit scared of the surgical thing. I just thought I didn’t want to be put to sleep, I didn’t like the idea of the needles, I didn’t like the idea of waking up and that, you know, that feeling of, kind of, well that’s it over (4304 PM).

A small number of women in the substudy referred to the emotional trauma involved in the medical procedure; often these were linked particularly to the pain and the sight of the fetus. Four women who underwent a medical procedure would prefer to have a surgical procedure instead if the situation arose again. One RM participant was profoundly affected by seeing the expelled fetus:

But now looking back to it, I would go with the surgical one. I think you’re going to get pain with each one so I think, you know, whether I got the same amount of pain with that one would just be very unlucky really but, you know, I’d know what to expect but with the surgical one. There’s no chance that I’d see the fetus so that would be what would be, what would sway me towards that one if I had to do it again (4564 RM).

However, other women saw MTOP as offering greater control and confidentiality. Importantly, they saw MTOP as procedurally easier. For example:

And I think at the end of the day it was quicker for me and quicker for them at the hospital just to do the tablets, it was easier, you weren’t having anaesthetic people and it wasn’t an operating theatre or anything like that, you were just in a ward, with a bed, think it was easier (5042 PM).

Other women in the PM arm described this method as more ‘natural’, a view also taken by participants in other qualitative studies.67,68

The idea of ‘control’ was elaborated on in the interviews with women who tried to explain their reasons for choosing the medical procedure in spite of the drawbacks of the method. For example, one RM participant felt that being under an anaesthetic
was being ‘detached’ and therefore she preferred the medical method, where she could assume a degree of responsibility for what was happening. Another was anxious about ‘not know[ing] what’s going on’ and not being ‘in control’. A PM participant opted to both be in control and to be ‘responsible’. ‘I just wanted to see it through myself’, she said.

The speed of the surgical procedure was acknowledged by 9 of 30 participants in the substudy. A number of women reflected on the fact that waiting for the medical process to happen was problematic. A PS participant said that:

…the nurse talked me through it and said you have this and then, you know, you’ll start to have pain and then you know the fetus might come out and then that might not happen and you might have to have more and then wait another few hours and then if it still doesn’t happen then you can stay in overnight and then I was like ‘Oh my God’ that’s just getting worse and worse and worse (3648 PS).

Other participants in the surgical arms were very clear that they wanted to be unconscious during the procedure. Rather than be in ‘control’ as women who preferred the medical option wished, they wanted instead to be ‘completely oblivious’ and not know that anything had happened. One said that she did not want to ‘see it coming away’; another sought to avoid the experience of ‘something coming out of me’, and another was pleased that she didn’t have to ‘live through it’. Six women referred to the surgical procedure as offering them the advantage of it being ‘done properly’ all in one go and three were glad it did not involve a second visit. This sense of finality was also expressed in the following ways: wanting an ‘end’ to it, having it all to be ‘fixed’, ‘done and dusted in one day’, ‘all over, gone’.

Women’s perspectives on the conjoint analysis (DCE)

The novel component of this qualitative substudy was that it followed-up the DCE. It is important to note that this was not intended to ‘verify’ the results of the DCE by applying it to the actual study group, but was rather intended to develop a lay analysis of its results.

In the interview, women were shown a flash card describing the results of the DCE in summary form. The flash card showed the order of factors affecting preferences for MTOP or STOP. Interviewees were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the relative importance of these factors, and to give their reasons. They were also asked why they thought these features were ranked in this way, and whether there were other aspects of the experience that needed to be considered. The results of this process are interesting, but not conclusive. Some women distinguished between the ranking features according to their personal experience as opposed to what they would recommend on behalf of women in general. Others found it difficult to respond to the question or to retain a firm view.

Women’s responses to these questions were collated and analysed according to how they would rank the features themselves (Table 48). The findings from this exercise differed significantly from the results of the DCE. While ‘waiting time’ was overall the most important (20 women ranked it in first place, while 7 ranked it in second place), counselling was considered the second most important feature (6 put this in first place and 11 in second place). ‘Consciousness’ was overall the third most important feature as six women put it in first place, and four women in second place. However, the choices of women in the sub-study appeared to be closely linked to their experience of the termination. For women who had had a medical termination, ten out of the 13 put waiting time as their top priority, while ten out of 17 who had had a surgical termination did so. As a medical termination can only be carried within a certain number of weeks of gestation, this may explain why timing was more significant to these women, particularly those with a specific preference for the procedure.

I think it was good because I had a chance to go through the things in my head and be absolutely certain that was what I wanted to do (4062 PS).

However, 11 women felt that the waiting time was far too long, and for two of them the waiting was the worst part of the experience. They considered going to a private clinic to speed up the process. One said that:

As soon as you find out you’re pregnant you just want it over with. I would have quite happily gone in that day (5042 PM).

While for most women, a short waiting period was much preferred, the expectations and stresses...
TABLE 48 Top three factors influencing women’s choice of method of TOP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank position</th>
<th>Waiting time</th>
<th>Counselling</th>
<th>Consciousness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>RS</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MTOP, n = 13; STOP, n = 17.

associated with it were subject to a number of different interpretations according to women’s circumstances. One participant, who was ambivalent about having the termination in the first place, appreciated that the procedure was quick:

Yeah, it was pretty quick, I was quite shocked at how quick it was actually…I thought it was a bit hurried but coming to think about it now it was better that way…’cos then you didn’t have a chance to sit and think about it and worry about it (5002 PM).

Apart from gestational age, women’s household living arrangements and experience of morning sickness could also be factors that affected their sense of urgency. For example:

And that it, it seemed like forever ’cos by that stage I had really bad morning sickness and I just, I could hardly function [laughs]. It was horrible, er, and ’cos I live in a shared house with my sister and her friend and I didn’t want to tell them about the pregnancy test, I was trying to hide it from them (4578 RS).

While being unconscious was more of an issue for those who had had a surgical termination, counselling appeared to be important to those who had had the medical procedure: 8 of 13 rated counselling in first and second place, while 9 of 17 in the surgical arm did so. This might be an indication of the level of distress that these women underwent. However, interviews provided a mixed view of counselling. Some women equated counselling with personal support that they were able to access from family and friends, while it was more specific for others. Access to counselling was uneven across the 30 women. Of the 15 women who elaborated on their views that counselling was important, equal numbers expressed the opinion that counselling was more important before, after, or both before and after the procedure. Among this group, 10 women had support from other sources, and of these, five did not think counselling was necessary. Six women felt they did need counselling. For example:

I think you automatically look at what you’ve been through and think well it’s like afterwards, when I think I could have done with seeing someone for once, er, I don’t know, it’s, I wouldn’t like anyone to feel the way I felt and not be able to talk to anyone professionally about it. I mean family members, yeah, but they don’t really understand if they haven’t been through it (4552 PS).

Five women had experienced formal counselling. This compared counselling favourably to support from family and friends:

Yeah, it was good to talk to someone out of the whole equation… It’s not like friends and family and everyone was telling us to think things ‘Oh just do what you want’ and I didn’t know what I wanted. So it was just nice to talk to someone out of the whole equation (3796 PS).

In contrast, five women in the surgical arm put ‘being asleep or awake’ in first place compared with only one in the medical arm. A participant in the PM arm described why she rated being asleep as more important than any of the other features:

Er, you got a bit of a shock but you had to check to see what you passed and I got a bit of a shock… They said just leave it and we’ll check it for you but I guess because I was at the point where I was absolutely desperate to
pass something and so I didn’t have to have the operation, er I, and it was quite large so you… not like you could not see it I guess (4400 PM).

When women were asked if they thought other features should be included in the list, 18 women had suggestions to make. Six women mentioned that a friendly and sensitive attitude of medical and nursing staff towards them was important. Four women suggested that information should be one of the features. Privacy was also referred to by two women, and post-TOP care and support by another two women.
Introduction

This trial sought to determine the acceptability, clinical effectiveness and cost of MTOP and STOP at less than 14 weeks of pregnancy. Despite poor recruitment to the randomised arm of the trial, the results show that, at 2 weeks after the procedure, women in the surgical arms were more likely to opt to have the same method again compared to women having MTOP. This difference in acceptability at 2 weeks was found to increase with gestational age at abortion and the greater acceptability of STOP persisted at 3 months. Women having MTOP were more likely to report symptoms during their admission and they had higher pain scores. Further, MTOP was associated with more unplanned emergency admissions and more complications. Consistent with these findings, women’s experiences of care were generally more negative and they were less satisfied with MTOP. However, STOP was more costly due to much higher standard costs. Whether STOP would be considered cost-effective depends on the value placed on increased effectiveness for this increased cost. Despite these differences, many women chose MTOP and found the procedure acceptable.

Comparison with prior studies

Although the procedure for STOP is consistent in prior studies of abortion prior to 14 weeks, a number of different medical regimens have been employed; early randomised trials employed prostaglandins alone\(^1\)\(^6\) or mifepristone alone.\(^7\) A systematic review of medical methods for first-trimester abortion concluded that combined mifepristone and prostaglandins was more effective (in terms of achieving complete abortion) than prostaglandins or mifepristone alone.\(^8\) Single-agent regimens are no longer recommended in the UK.\(^9\) Therefore, in order to allow meaningful comparisons, studies quoted in the following discussion are limited to those in which MTOP was attempted using mifepristone followed by prostaglandins.

Trial design

The primary outcome (acceptability) and the design (partially randomised patient preference) of this trial were stipulated in the Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Commissioning Brief. Although a randomised clinical trial would be the most scientifically rigorous design for evaluating MTOP and STOP, it cannot deal with the post-randomisation effects of patient’s preferences on treatment outcomes.\(^7\) Participant preferences may affect compliance and motivation, introducing bias that affects the internal validity of a trial. Thus in the case of TOP, women randomised to their preferred procedure may be better motivated and report better outcomes, while women who do not receive their preferred method may be less motivated, may not report accurately during follow-up and may even drop out of the trial.\(^7\) Effects of preference are likely to be more apparent where the outcome measure is subjective and self-reported by the patient. In addition patients’ preferences may also have a ‘therapeutic effect’, similar to a placebo effect, directly influencing outcomes.\(^7\) Where strong preferences exist, as appears likely with TOP method,\(^17\)\(^20\) a large number of participants may refuse randomisation, adversely affecting the external validity of the trial and limiting the generalisability of the results.\(^7\)

The approach taken to deal with women’s preferences in this trial was to employ a partially randomised preference design. This design takes women’s preferences into account in the allocation of TOP method, generating two groups of women in whom motivational factors should have been optimised by allowing them to choose their own method of TOP and two groups of randomised women in whom motivational factors should have been equalised. This allows the independent effect of women’s preferences to be examined, thus providing information on the benefits of providing a choice.\(^7\) A disadvantage of this design is that the outcome (acceptability) may be affected by uncontrolled confounders in the preference groups, which may bias the results.\(^7\) An alternate approach would have been to use a fully randomised preference trial in which, after
Discussion

consent and before randomisation, women’s preferences were recorded and taken into account in the analysis.\textsuperscript{77} Although a potential criticism of this design is that ignoring patients’ preferences and proceeding with randomisation is unethical, this may not be the case if the treatments being offered are believed to be effective and patients give fully informed consent.\textsuperscript{72} It is still unclear whether patient preferences significantly affect the validity of randomised trials. In a systematic review of predominantly partially randomised preference trials, King \textit{et al.}\textsuperscript{73} found that while preferences led to a substantial proportion of people refusing randomisation, there was little evidence that outcomes differed between randomised and preference groups across the trials. In contrast, a recent systematic review of eight fully randomised preference trials in musculoskeletal medicine found that, after adjustment for baseline scores and categorical variables of trial and treatment allocation, preferences were associated with treatment effects: patients who were randomised to their preferred treatment had a standardised effect size greater than that of those who were indifferent to the treatment assigned.\textsuperscript{72} Perhaps surprisingly this review also showed that participants who did not receive their preference were more likely to return their first follow-up questionnaire, although overall response rates were similar.

Baseline characteristics

Comparison of the baseline characteristics revealed a number of differences between the three allocation groups. Within the preference groups, women opting for STOP were more advanced in their pregnancy and were more likely to smoke, to be educated up to GCSE level and to have had a prior live birth. However, the only difference between women in the randomised and preference groups was that mean age was slightly greater (1.2 years) in the preference arm, a difference similar to that reported in the systematic review of fully randomised patient preference trials.\textsuperscript{72} No such differences in participant characteristics were reported in the two smaller partially randomised preference trials of TOP method conducted in the UK,\textsuperscript{17,18} although Henshaw \textit{et al.}\textsuperscript{17} did find that women preferring STOP had a greater distance to travel to hospital. This parameter was not recorded in the present study.

Trial recruitment

Only 19\% of women recruited to the study were prepared to have their method of termination randomly assigned. Changes to the written information given to women, emphasising the absence of evidence that one method was superior and the value of randomisation, failed to increase randomisation rates which remained much lower than in our pilot trial conducted in 2002; of the 284 suitable women at 9–13 weeks of pregnancy in the pilot, 49\% were prepared to be randomised to MTOP or STOP. The achieved randomisation rate was also much lower than prior partially randomised trials of TOP method conducted in the UK, which reported randomisation rates of 54\%\textsuperscript{17} and 82\%.\textsuperscript{18}

We can speculate on the reasons for these differences. It is possible that knowledge of abortion methods, particularly MTOP, has increased over recent years. Certainly the availability and acceptance of MTOP, both in Newcastle upon Tyne and nationally, has increased dramatically; medical procedures accounted for 35\% of all abortions in 2007\textsuperscript{4} compared with only 12\% in 2001 and 0\% in 1991 (the year mifepristone was licensed in the UK).\textsuperscript{5} With improved knowledge and an increasing emphasis on choice, stressed in the NHS literature on TOP supplied by the Trust, women in the current study may have felt more empowered to state a preference. The accounts of women participating in the qualitative substudy are informative in this context: decisions about mode of TOP were mainly founded on issues around control and on prior experiences (either personal or those of friends/relatives), some of which related to MTOP. Further, while some women may have agreed to randomisation to ‘oblige’ staff, most of the randomised women interviewed chose this option as a means of resolving their difficulties in deciding on a preferred method.

The problem of explaining the rationale and process of randomisation to participants in clinical trials is well known\textsuperscript{79} and some of the women interviewed voiced difficulties understanding these concepts. We considered the possibility that personnel involved in patient assessment for TOP and trial recruitment could have influenced the proportion of women opting for randomisation. In both the previous studies conducted in Aberdeen,\textsuperscript{17,18} (A Templeton, University of Aberdeen, 2008, personal communication) and in our pilot trial, medical staff were involved in both processes. In contrast, in the current study
women were predominantly assessed by nurse practitioners and all recruitment was undertaken by research nurses. The fact that recruitment rates were the same for each research nurse suggests that the process of recruitment was conducted in a consistent manner. However, randomisation rates were higher in women seen by one of the nurse practitioners, suggesting that despite attempts to standardise the dialogue about the trial, women’s views on randomisation were influenced, albeit to a small degree, by the health professional who introduced the study. Although recruitment rates did not seem to be influenced by involvement of medical staff, the small number of women assessed by them precludes any firm conclusions.

**Preferences**

Slightly more than half (54%) of the women who expressed a preference opted for a medical procedure. It is difficult to draw meaningful comparisons with prior studies because of variations in study design and service/user attitudes to medical abortion. In a review of 12 studies of women at ≤9 weeks of pregnancy published prior to 1994, Winikoff reported that ‘in most trials’ 60–70% of women chose medical abortion. In the partially randomised preference trial of Henshaw et al. conducted in Aberdeen, 72 of 156 (46%) women at ≤9 weeks of pregnancy in the preference arm preferred MTOP, while in the subsequent trial from the same unit only 15 of 77 (19%) of women at 10–13 weeks of pregnancy preferred MTOP.

In order to better understand the reasons underlying women’s choice of abortion method, we collected the reason(s) for procedure preference in all women in the preference arm immediately after recruitment. We attempted to group stated reasons into broad categories to facilitate interpretation and comparison with previous studies, but acknowledge this required several assumptions and resulted in an oversimplification of the data. Awareness during the procedure (which is closely linked to, but not synonymous with, a desire to avoid general anaesthesia) was cited by nearly 60% of women opting for MTOP. Previous studies have reported that 37–59% of women stated fear of anaesthesia or surgery as the reason for choosing MTOP at less than 9 weeks’ gestation. Ashok et al. reported that 67% of women preferring MTOP at 10–13 weeks perceived being conscious/aware as an advantage of the method, while 78% saw avoiding anaesthesia as an advantage. In contrast, 27% of women opting for STOP stated they wanted to be unconscious/unaware of the procedure and a further 15% did not want to pass or see the fetus. A desire to be unconscious was deemed important/advantageous by 39% of women who opted for STOP in the study by Henshaw et al., but by 94% of those opting for STOP at 10–13 weeks. All these prior studies also identified that women with a preference for MTOP perceived this as a more ‘natural’ procedure with fewer complications/psychological problems. For a small proportion of women the avoidance of an additional visit and the greater likelihood of avoiding an overnight stay were important factors in choosing STOP.

The importance of ‘control’ during the abortion procedure was further emphasised and developed by the women who participated in the qualitative component of the study. Women who preferred STOP sought to control their exposure to the experience of the procedure (which was achieved with finality while they were unconscious). Opting for STOP ensured they would not see the fetus and were less likely to experience pain. In contrast, women who sought MTOP wanted to exercise a degree of control over the process itself. Awareness was seen as assuming responsibility for what was happening. Consistent with views of participants in other qualitative studies, several of the women in the preference MTOP group described the MTOP procedure as more ‘natural’ in contrast to STOP which was perceived as ‘harsh’ and ‘brutal’.

**Strength of preference**

We sought to gain more quantitative information about women’s strength of preference by recording WTP. When assessed prior to TOP, the maximum amounts that women were prepared to pay to have their preferred option (rather than their less preferred option) were similar for the two methods (mean £373 for MTOP, mean £432 for STOP). At 2 weeks after abortion, women in the preference arm were prepared to pay more for their preferred option, but there were no differences in mean maximum WTP values for each method in the randomised arm (MTOP £193 versus STOP £216) or the preference arm (MTOP £329 versus STOP £357). Gibb et al. are the only other group to compare strength of preference for abortion method by WTP. In their small study of 50 women there were no differences in mean WTP values between women preferring MTOP and STOP (both before and after abortion). Despite only two women being zero-payers, mean WTP values were lower.
(MTOP £103, STOP £48) than those recorded in the present study. These values were also lower than the amount women were prepared to pay for their choice of TOP method in the study of Howie et al.27 from the same unit (median £311, range £40–500).

The WTP method has been advocated as a way of eliciting public preferences for alternate healthcare programmes.80 We found the method simple and quick to administer, a key consideration in the present study in view of the large number of outcomes being collected. However, the method has several limitations. Convergent validity is low,81 although other preference elicitation methods used in economic analyses, e.g. conjoint analyses and the various health status violation techniques, also have problems with consistency.82 A further limitation is the extent to which WTP can be associated with ‘ability to pay’.83 Gibb et al.38 found that WTP for TOP method was positively associated with social class and the importance women attached to having a choice, supporting the validity of the technique in this population. We found a correlation between stated WTP and women’s income, providing some support for the internal validity of the measure in this study. Based on the present findings, and those of Howie et al.,27 it can be concluded that the majority of women attach significant value to being able to choose their method of abortion. Further, while most women express a preference for abortion method, the strength of this preference, as assessed by the amount they are willing to pay to attain it, is similar for MTOP and STOP.

Creinin20 in his small randomised trial of MTOP and STOP sought to determine strength of preference using a VAS. Mean VAS scores were similar for those women in each group (STOP 93%, MTOP 63%) who found the method to which they were randomised acceptable (as determined by their choice for future abortion method). No other VAS data were presented. These results appear to support the conclusion of the present study that the strength of preference women have for their preferred method of TOP (whether that be the method chosen for their index abortion or for a future abortion) is similar for MTOP and STOP.

Service attributes

In an attempt to identify key factors that shape women’s preferences for TOP services, we conducted a DCE in a sample of non-pregnant women attending a family planning clinic. The rationale for selecting this patient group was to ascertain the expectations and views of potential future users of TOP services. From the attributes considered, provision of counselling, procedural waiting time, need for overnight stay and consciousness during the procedure significantly shaped women’s preferences. We were able to further develop this analysis in the substudy. The women interviewed prioritised waiting time above counselling and consciousness. The significance of waiting time was also emphasised by some women during their interviews. The high priority given by women to avoidance of an overnight stay supports the use of this measure of effectiveness in the trial.

It is reasonable to assume that waiting time was not relevant to women’s choice of TOP method as the waiting times for MTOP and STOP after recruitment to the trial were very similar (usually less than 7 days and always less than 10 days). The RCOG standard for waiting time from first appointment with the referring doctor to the procedure is 3 weeks;29 over the duration of the trial this standard was met in nearly 90% of pregnancies less than 14 weeks’ gestation. However, in other units this standard is met in less than 50% of cases.84 This study identified delays both before and after referral from primary care and the barriers faced by women seeking abortion; 82% of 140 GPs surveyed considered themselves ‘broadly anti-abortion’ and the authors emphasised the need to evaluate alternative approaches that bypass traditional gatekeepers to abortion care.84 These barriers were also highlighted by some women participating in the substudy (see below).

Availability of counselling is also unlikely to have impacted on women’s preferences for TOP method. Women in the trial were not given routine follow-up appointments for counselling. Rather, in keeping with national guidance,9 they were all given a contact telephone number to access a trained counsellor provided as part of the NHS service.

Acceptability

Acceptability was the primary outcome of the trial and we chose to assess this by determining the proportion of women who would opt to have the same procedure again. This measure was chosen for two reasons: (1) it was easy to collect, particularly using text messaging (perceived to be a novel means of optimising data collection in this participant group); and (2) virtually all previous
randomised trials: 74% versus 87% (p < 0.001) in respectively. This finding is consistent with prior randomisation trials: 74% versus 87% (p < 0.001) in the study of Henshaw et al.17 in women ≤9 weeks’ gestation, and 63% versus 92% (p < 0.001) in the study of Creinin20 in women < 7 weeks’ gestation. A smaller difference (70% versus 79%, p < 0.001) was reported by Ashok et al.18 in women at 10–13 weeks of pregnancy, although the results from randomised and preference arms were combined. No differences were reported in the small trial of Rosen et al.69

In keeping with prior studies,79 women in the preference arms were more likely to regard their chosen method as acceptable. Consistent with the results in the randomised arm, more women choosing STOP than MTOP opted to have the same procedure again (96.5% versus 80.9% respectively at 2 weeks), an effect maintained at 3 months (95.6% versus 79.0%). In contrast, Henshaw et al.17 found no difference in acceptability between women who preferred STOP and those who preferred MTOP (90% versus 95%), although numbers were much smaller (n = 156). Results from prior prospective cohort studies comparing STOP and MTOP before 9 weeks’ gestation have found conflicting results in terms of procedure acceptability. However, the extent to which women chose their method of abortion in these studies varied; in most of the earlier studies reporting high acceptability rates with MTOP, the procedure was not generally available and women themselves sought out access to medical abortion.24

In more recent cohort studies where women had choice of abortion method, STOP has been found to be either as acceptable85 or more acceptable86 than MTOP.

Surgical TOP remained more acceptable to women in both arms of the trial at 3 months after the procedure. Only 26 of 382 (7%) women who provided responses at both time points changed their responses, of whom 16 (13 in PM and 3 in RM arms) would no longer opt for MTOP in the future. Howie et al.27 reported 2-year follow-up data from 80% of the women participating in the partially randomised preference trial of Henshaw et al.17 Of those women originally allocated to treatment according to preference, 89% in both the MTOP and STOP groups opted for the same procedure in future. In contrast, 64% of women randomised to MTOP, but 87% randomised to STOP opted for the same procedure (95% CI for difference in proportions −39 to −1, p < 0.05). These findings support the conclusion that more women regard STOP as acceptable.

Acceptability of MTOP declined as gestational age increased such that by 13 weeks’ gestation only 50% of women opted to have MTOP again. In contrast, the acceptability of STOP remained high (> 90%) between 5 and 13 weeks. Studies on early MTOP have consistently shown that procedure failure and more pain and bleeding than expected are predictors of not choosing MTOP again.24,87–89 The likelihood of each of these predictors increases with gestational age.15,80 Of particular relevance is the increase in need for surgical evacuation following MTOP because of ongoing pregnancy or missed/incomplete abortion, which has been reported to increase from 0.9% at 9–10 weeks to 7.9% at 12–13 weeks of pregnancy.15 Unsuccessful medical therapy has also been shown to reduce acceptability in a randomised trial of medical and surgical management of early pregnancy failure.90 Although we did not undertake a detailed analysis of predictors of acceptability, we did confirm that acceptability at both 2 weeks and 3 months was reduced in women experiencing complications.

Semantic rating/satisfaction

To further assess women’s experiences of the abortion procedure we used semantic differentials constructed using bipolar adjectival scales as end points on a graphic Likert scale. The instrument is easy to use and has been shown to be internally consistent and valid.91,92 Rather than develop a new set of adjectival pairs, we utilised the 12 pairs employed by Henshaw et al.17 and Ashok et al.79,95 in their studies of the acceptability of MTOP and STOP. At both 2 weeks and 3 months after the procedure, MTOP was rated significantly lower on all 12 bipolar adjectives in the preference group and on 11 of 12 in the randomised group, clearly indicating that women rated their experiences of MTOP more negatively than their experiences of STOP: MTOP was felt to be more unpleasant, more disagreeable, harder and more painful, while STOP was felt to be milder, more agreeable, faster and safer. These experiential effects were greater than those reported by Henshaw et al.17 who found that MTOP was rated lower on six of the 12 adjectives in their randomised arm but only on
Discussion

one of the 12 in their preference groups (MTOP was more painful). However, the fewer significant differences may have been explained by the much smaller sample size in the Aberdeen study. Ashok et al. 93 analysed their data by totalling the scores for each adjectival pair to give an estimate of change in ‘self-esteem’ before and after abortion. More women randomised to MTOP at 10–13 weeks of pregnancy had a fall in ‘self-esteem’.

Fewer women having MTOP rated their overall care as excellent. Again this result was consistent across both trial arms and at both time points. Women were less satisfied with the technical and interpersonal aspects of care, but not the waiting time for MTOP. Although satisfaction data were not reported in previous randomised trials, two cohort studies comparing MTOP and STOP have measured overall satisfaction with care; Slade et al. 86 found no difference in mean scores on the Satisfaction with Care Scale, but Jensen et al., 24 using a 5-point scale, reported higher mean satisfaction scores with STOP. Taken together the results of the present study and those of most prior studies suggest that experiences of care are more negative and satisfaction lower with MTOP, likely contributing to the lower acceptability of medical abortion prior to 14 weeks of pregnancy.

Psychological outcome

Anxiety and depression, as assessed by HADS or Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scales (EPDS), have consistently been shown to fall after abortion. 26,85,86,93 Consistent with prior randomised trials 26,93 and cohort studies 85,86,94,95 that have used HADS or EPDS as a means of screening for anxiety and depression, we found no difference in mean scores between women having MTOP and STOP. The proportion of ‘clinical’ cases of anxiety and depression during the first month after abortion (inferred, for example, by the proportion of women with HADS > 10) has also been found to be similar in women having MTOP and STOP (6–28% for anxiety and 2–10% for depression). 26,85,86,93 Interestingly, Ashok et al. 93 in addition to the HADS, measured anxiety levels using a VAS before and after TOP at 10–13 weeks; women randomised to STOP were more anxious prior to the procedure, but less anxious following abortion than women randomised to MTOP. No such differences were recorded in the preference arm. Long-term follow-up studies of women having first-trimester abortion have generally found no evidence of an increased risk of anxiety or depression, but these studies have not differentiated between MTOP and STOP. 96–98

The IES has been used for over 20 years as a measure of stress reactions after traumatic events. 40 The scale is based on the two common responses to stress: intrusion, involving unbidden thoughts and images, bad dreams and strong feelings related to the event; and avoidance, involving denial of thoughts and feelings related to the event. 40 Systematic review has shown that the two-scale structure is stable over different types of traumatic events (e.g. injury, illness and bereavement) and has convergent validity with observer-diagnosed post-traumatic stress disorder. 99 Compared with the mean IES scores reported here, Broen et al., 100 reported slightly lower mean scores on both subscales at 10 days after induced abortion (method not defined). Thereafter IES avoidance scores remained unchanged (at 8–10 points) at 6 months, 2 years and 5 years after TOP, while IES intrusion scores fell reaching a mean value of 3.6 points at 5 years. The proportion of IES intrusion ‘cases’ (defined as those with a score > 19) fell from 24% at 10 days to less than 5% at 2 and 5 years after TOP, while the proportion of IES avoidance cases increased slightly from 12% to 19%. 100 As emphasised by the authors, the IES is not a measure of post-traumatic stress disorder. 99 Rather, classification as a ‘case’ infers that the person suffers some degree of mental distress. Many women have avoidance symptoms after induced abortion and the incidence appears to be influenced by culture; Rue et al. 101 reported that 36% of American women reported three or more avoidance symptoms compared with only 3% of Russian women. The incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder in these populations, as determined by the Traumatic Stress Institute’s Belief Scale, was 14% and 1% respectively.

Women randomised to MTOP had higher scores on both subscales at 3 months and on the intrusion subscale at 2 weeks after the procedure. No differences were evident between women opting for MTOP and STOP. The only study to compare IES scores after MTOP and STOP was reported by Slade et al., 86 in their study mean scores on the two subscales were almost identical to those reported here and were similar in the two TOP groups at 4 weeks post procedure. However, within the medical group, those women who had seen their fetus (56%) were more likely to experience intrusive events (nightmares, unwanted thoughts and images). Mean gestational age at MTOP was more advanced in the current study and it is possible that the difference in IES intrusion scores relates to a higher proportion of women seeing their fetus. One could speculate that women in the preference
group were less affected and/or better prepared for this eventuality.

### Side effects

The procedure of MTOP was associated with more pain and more gastrointestinal symptoms than STOP. These results are in agreement with previous randomised trials and cohort studies.\(^{12,17,20,86}\) The incidence of side effects during MTOP has varied substantially between different studies. For example, the proportion of women reporting vomiting and diarrhoea has varied between 0–49% and 0–43% respectively.\(^{18,20,88,102}\) The incidence and severity of symptoms is influenced by the dose and route of administration of misoprostol; gastrointestinal symptoms and fever are more common with oral administration.\(^{88}\) We found that a similar proportion of women (~22%) having MTOP and STOP were still bleeding 2 weeks after the procedure, although more women in the MTOP group reported heavy blood loss. Duration of bleeding has consistently been reported to be longer after MTOP than STOP and longer after abortion at 10–13 weeks compared with abortion at ≤9 weeks.\(^{16,18,20,24,96}\) Further, bleeding in excess of expectations (either in terms of amount or duration) has been reported more frequently after MTOP.\(^{86}\) In their cohort study, Slade et al.\(^{86}\) found that more women reported ‘disruption of activities’ after MTOP than STOP (44% versus 15% respectively); this could be explained as a consequence of differences in symptomatology. We sought to determine the impact of TOP by ascertaining when women returned to normal activities. There were no differences in this measure or the time taken to return to work between groups; reassuringly, around 90% of women had returned to normal activity/work by the 2-week follow-up.

### Effectiveness

We chose to assess the overall clinical effectiveness of MTOP and STOP using unplanned/emergency admission requiring an overnight stay. We reasoned that this would capture all significant procedure-related morbidity. Feedback from women during our pilot trial also underscored that this was an important outcome for women; in addition to the disruption of domestic and work-related activities, a high proportion of women had not informed their partners or parents of their TOP, making unplanned overnight stay a significant problem.

Rates of unplanned or emergency admission were higher in the MTOP group in both the randomised and preference arms; overall 4.2% of women having MTOP had an unplanned overnight stay compared with 0.7% of women having STOP. Most of these admissions were overnight stays on the day of the MTOP procedure due to failure to achieve complete uterine evacuation. As the study had limited precision to estimate differences in specific complications, we reported the overall rate of complications that included haemorrhage, incomplete abortion, failed abortion and suspected pelvic infection. Complication rates were more common after MTOP, although this difference only achieved statistical significance when comparing preference arms. Overall 5.0% of women having MTOP experienced a complication compared with 2.6% of women having STOP.

Previous randomised trials have tended not to report complication rates, presumably because of the small numbers of women recruited. However, in their randomised preference trial of MTOP and STOP at 10–13 weeks’ gestation, Ashok et al.\(^{18}\) reported ‘failure’ rates within 8 weeks of abortion, i.e. failure to achieve complete uterine evacuation without the need for a second procedure [subsequent surgical (re)curettage or medical regimen]. In this study, 11 of 203 (5.4%) undergoing MTOP and 5 of 242 (2.1%) undergoing STOP had a failed TOP, a difference that was not statistically significant.

Several studies have reported single-unit comparative studies of MTOP and STOP. Jensen et al.\(^{24}\) reported primary procedure failure (defined as the need for suction curettage) in 18% of 150 women having MTOP and 4.6% of 151 women having STOP at up to 9 weeks’ gestation. The high ‘failure’ rates may partly reflect the MTOP regimen used (single dose of 400 µg misoprostol orally) and the fact that emergency curettage was not based on evidence of products of conception. In a study of 932 women undergoing abortion at ≤9 weeks of pregnancy, surgical curettage for ‘presumed retained products of conception’ and ongoing pregnancy was more common in women having MTOP than STOP (9.8% versus 5.5% respectively).\(^{103}\) More women having MTOP were admitted overnight during their TOP (3.8% versus 0% respectively), but rates of presentation as an emergency were similar (9.0% versus 8.8% respectively). Rates of emergency admission with overnight stay were not reported. Hamoda et al.\(^{104}\) reviewed 1927 consecutive cases of abortion at 9–13 weeks’ gestation. Detailed analysis of 1076 cases of
Discussion

MTOP was reported together with basic outcomes of 851 women having STOP. No statistical comparisons of the two methods were performed. In total 4.2% of MTOP cases required surgical evacuation: 1.9% for incomplete abortion, 0.5% for retained sac and 1.5% for continuing pregnancy; a further 0.4% of women required emergency curettage because of bleeding. Surgical evacuation rates increased from 2.7% at 64–70 days’ gestation to 8.0% at 85–91 days. Haemorrhage (blood loss > 500ml) occurred in eight women (0.8%) and suspected pelvic infection in 12 (1.1%). Repeat surgical evacuation, haemorrhage and suspected pelvic infection occurred in 0.8, 0.1 and 0.3% of STOP cases respectively.

Useful comparator data on complication rates also come from large prospective series of a single TOP method. Ashok et al. reviewed 4132 consecutive cases of MTOP up to 9 weeks of pregnancy. In total 2.3% of cases required surgical evacuation: 1.6% for incomplete abortion, 0.3% for missed abortion and 0.3% for continuing pregnancy. Surgical intervention rates were not influenced by gestational age (comparing groups up to 49 days’ and 50–63 days’ gestation) or by the misoprostol regimen (comparing one or two doses of misoprostol), although continuing pregnancy rates were higher with the single-dose regimen (0.6% versus 0.1%). Rates of haemorrhage and infection were not reported. No woman experienced uterine trauma (cervical laceration or uterine perforation), although two women underwent laparoscopy (and one a subsequent laparotomy) for suspected perforation. Hakim-Elahi et al. reviewed complications in 170,000 first-trimester STOPs performed in three New York clinics; repeat surgical evacuation was required in 0.4% of cases and sepsis/mild infection developed in 0.5%. Rates of cervical tear and uterine perforation amounted to only 0.01% each. No information was given on mean gestational age or the relationship between gestation and complication rates.

Thus the complication rates encountered in the present study were broadly in keeping with previous studies. Further, they support the overall conclusion that STOP is more effective than MTOP, being associated with lower failure rates (and hence lower rates of surgical evacuation) and lower rates of unplanned and emergency admission.

Costs and cost-effectiveness

The overall cost of STOP was greater than MTOP due to the higher inpatient standard costs, notably the operation (theatre), surgeon and anaesthetist costs, which accounted for 50% of the total cost of STOP. Thus even though complication rates (and costs) were higher with MTOP, the medical procedure was cheaper. STOP might still be cost-effective if the gain in effectiveness (measured here as avoidance of overnight stay) is worth paying for. The usefulness of this measure of cost-effectiveness depends on an understanding of the value of successfully completing TOP on the day of admission and thus avoiding unplanned or emergency overnight stay. The National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) sanctions new technologies according to an approximate threshold of £20,000–£30,000 per quality-adjusted life-year (QALY). If this decision guide were to be applied to a choice between MTOP and STOP, at an ICER of about £8000 per QALY (randomised arm), each overnight stay avoided would have to be worth at least approximately one-quarter of a QALY (or the equivalent of about 3 months in full health).

The national tariffs for STOP and MTOP are £504 and £432 respectively. Thus our costs for STOP approximate the tariff, but those for MTOP are substantially lower. We can speculate on the causes of this discrepancy. It may relate to differences in costing methods; national tariffs are derived from average costs over all NHS Trusts (over 300). Alternatively (or in addition), complication rates (and particularly surgical evacuation rates) related to MTOP may be lower in Newcastle upon Tyne than other units. However, even if this were the case, which seems unlikely in view of the comparability of complication rates with previous studies, this could not account for the differential cost.

There have been no recent studies of abortion costs from the UK. Creinin in his randomised trial of abortion methods below 9 weeks’ gestation estimated that STOP was 10% more expensive than MTOP. However, his assessment of resource use was limited to staff time and did not estimate actual monetary costs. Afable-Munsuz et al. assessed costs of MTOP models from data gathered from a sample of 11 abortion care settings. The total episode cost for providing MTOP ranged from $252 to $460. In 2001–2 the average self-paying woman in the USA was charged $372 for STOP, and between $252 to $460. In 2001–2 the average self-paying woman in the USA was charged $372 for STOP, and between $252 to $460. In 2001–2 the average self-paying woman in the USA was charged $372 for STOP, and between $252 to $460. In 2001–2 the average self-paying woman in the USA was charged $372 for STOP, and between $252 to $460.
MTOP in the second trimester. STOP was found to be less costly and more effective than MTOP. However, standard costs are higher for second-trimester MTOP.

It is important to emphasise that the policy for abortion provision (that must be funded and resourced) is not necessarily to move from one method to another. Rather, based on the results of the present study, there is a strong argument for considering making both methods available and giving women the choice. The costs provided can help inform any policy defined by a mix of MTOP and STOP in a range anywhere from 0% MTOP to 100% MTOP but which, in the context of choice, ideally reflects women’s preferences. It is therefore up to the decision-maker to weigh up any gain from changing the mix against any loss from taking resources from other aspects of health-care provision.

**Participants’ experiences of involvement in the trial**

One of the aims of the qualitative substudy was to better understand the factors that shape women’s experiences of the health service contexts in which clinical trials are undertaken. In addition, we wished to identify those factors that promote and inhibit women’s involvement in clinical trials on TOP.

Existing work on the ways that participants understand and enact their participation in clinical trials has tended to focus on older people participating in studies of the management of chronic illness, particularly cancer and cardiovascular disease, where the time horizons for consent, recruitment and trial participation are often extended over many months. This research has highlighted the difficulties that participants face in conceptualising and responding to randomisation processes and dealing with therapeutic misconception. An important motive in such research has been the perceived need to better understand processes of informed consent with the hope of improving recruitment, and retention into trials.

Research on participation in clinical trials of abortion differs in several important respects from research in other areas. First, participants tend to be young and are normally quite healthy. Second, although a clinical procedure is at issue, participation is not normally a matter of treatment. Third, the procedure itself is normally a single event and not a matter of management over an extended period. Finally, the time horizons in which women seek a termination, consent to enter a trial and undergo the procedure are highly compressed. Indeed, because these horizons are limited by the Abortion Act, timeliness of TOP is a matter of central importance. Qualitative research on experiences of participation in trials of TOP is limited – in a structured narrative review, we identified 18 qualitative studies. Of these, only three were embedded in studies comparing MTOP and STOP and all were conducted in the USA in the 1990s, two relating to home administration of mifepristone.

Our review highlighted rapid access to services characterised by supportive non-judgemental staff appeared to characterise positive responses to TOP. Participants in the present study also sought rapid access to abortion services and were concerned about the ways that professionals evaluated them. Those attending family planning clinics experienced a smoother pathway to secondary care that required them to invest less work in negotiating and co-ordinating their own care. Once in the hospital service, rapid assessment and treatment was important to women. The accounts of participants in this trial fit well with qualitative and observational data from the wider literature: unobstructed entry into care, supportive professionals and quick access to TOP were important. Women responded negatively to problems that retarded or obstructed their rapid progress along the clinical pathway. We know that participants were under significant psychosocial pressure in the period that they negotiated access to TOP, but their accounts of this are largely procedural in form.

Like participants in other clinical trials, participants in this trial accounted for their involvement through the notion of helping in some way; women’s accounts of enrolling into the trial were organised through a set of ideas about altruism in which an unpleasant experience (TOP) was compensated by helping others through participation in research. For some this was framed as a general ethical obligation, but for others different levels of personal benefit were also described. Their accounts of the trial itself were dominated by the problem of allocation to an arm of the trial (which was itself an important component of negotiating preferences), in which the question of randomisation played a significant part. Letting the computer ‘choose’ the method of
TOP remained something that some participants found hard to understand. In combination with what seems a strong set of pre-existing preferences, this led to poor recruitment into the randomisation arm of the trial. This is because the partial preference trial design enabled women to construct their choice to participate in altruistic terms. It also meant that they could control what that altruistic choice meant in practice, by choosing the arm of the trial that represented the mode of TOP that they actually preferred.

### Limitations of research

The main limitation of the study was the poor follow-up rates, particularly at 3 months after the procedure. By a combination of interview (at both hospital and community clinics), postal questionnaire, text messaging and web-based participant entry we were able to capture primary outcome data from 70% of participants, 10% more than we predicted. One of the major benefits of the purpose-designed computer system was the ability to collect data by text messaging and the internet. However, only 4% of participants utilised each of these approaches, with the majority of women (53%) preferring contact by telephone. As a result we were able to collect complete secondary outcome data from a minority of women. Methods of data collection were more limited at 3 months (being confined to postal, telephone or web-based questionnaires). This may account for the low rate of data collection at this time (21%). The difficulties obtaining follow-up data on women after abortion have been highlighted previously, with response rates typically between 60% and 75% within the 4 weeks after the procedure, falling to as low as 30% thereafter.18,26,27,86,97,100

### Conclusions

In this randomised preference trial of medical and surgical abortion in pregnancies less than 14 weeks’ gestation, MTOP was associated with more negative experiences of care and lower acceptability, as determined by fewer women opting for the same procedure in the future. The acceptability of MTOP declined with increasing gestational age. Although MTOP was less costly, it was less clinically effective than STOP, being associated with more unplanned admissions and more complications. The trial provides further evidence that women value the option to choose abortion method; over 80% of participants expressed a preference, of whom just over half opted for MTOP. The majority of those choosing MTOP were satisfied with their care and would choose the same method again in the future.

A large number of participants declined randomisation in this trial reflecting, at least in part, strong preferences about abortion method. While this generates concern about the external validity of the trial and the generalisability of the results, the anticipated impact on future patient outcomes also depends on the nature of the changes in clinical practice that are implemented in response to the trial results. If, as here, the results do not support the unambiguous superiority of one treatment over another, and there is evidence of strong preferences, then the policy response which best reflects all the study data would be to continue doing what was done in the trial, i.e. to offer patients choice. In these circumstances, we would argue that the generalisability of the overall conclusion drawn from the study data will be enhanced in comparison to that based upon a more traditional trial design.
Implications for health care

Provision of abortion care varies substantially across England and Wales; a national survey in 2000 found that, of those units with facilities for abortion before 13 weeks, only 32% of NHS units and 41% of specialised non-NHS units provided both MTOP and STOP. Even fewer (21%) NHS units provided both methods after 13 weeks. While provision of MTOP has increased since 2000, there is increasing concern that access to STOP, particularly after 12 weeks of pregnancy, is declining. This study provides persuasive evidence that a patient-centred abortion service should offer women the choice of medical or surgical termination up to 14 weeks’ of pregnancy.

Surgical TOP was more costly than MTOP, but more effective (as determined by lower rates of unplanned overnight stay and emergency admissions). STOP might still therefore be cost-effective if this gain in effectiveness is felt to be worth paying for. The results of the DCE indicated that women felt that avoidance of overnight stay was an important service attribute. Another key attribute, also emphasised by many of the women interviewed, was waiting time. There is evidence of barriers to referral within primary care, and similar concerns were identified by some of the women interviewed. As complication rates increase with gestational age at abortion, it is important that women can access abortion services as quickly as possible; subsequent to completion of this trial a system of direct access has been introduced that allows women seeking abortion to refer themselves to the termination service.

In order to make an informed choice about abortion method, women need high-quality information about their options. Evidence suggests that most leaflets from abortion services in England and Wales contain insufficient information to enable informed decision-making. This study provides important information that should be incorporated into a national evidence-based decision-aid leaflet.

Summary of key recommendations for practice

1. Patient-centred abortion services should offer women the choice of abortion method up to 14 weeks’ of pregnancy.
2. In order to make an informed choice about abortion method, women need high-quality information about their options.
3. Abortion services should be accessible to women including direct access options. Where GPs are uncomfortable referring women for abortion, systems need to be in place to ensure they are redirected promptly.

Recommendations for future research

1. Audit of provision of MTOP and STOP in England and Wales: the last national survey of abortion provision was in 2000 and there is an urgent need to reaudit available NHS and specialised non-NHS services.
2. Exploration of barriers to offering women the choice of TOP method and ways of improving accessibility to TOP services. The Faculty of Family Planning and Reproductive Health have expressed concern regarding provision of STOP services, particularly after 12 weeks of pregnancy. The barriers to development and maintenance of this service, particularly within the NHS sector, need exploring.
3. Comparison of MTOP and manual vacuum aspiration under local anaesthetic in pregnancies below 9 weeks’ gestation: many women would prefer not to have MTOP, but also fear general anaesthesia. Manual vacuum aspiration is a safe and effective method of early abortion, but has never been compared with MTOP in a UK population.
4. Comparison of MTOP and STOP after 14 weeks’ gestation: surgical abortion after 14 weeks necessitates dilatation and evacuation. The only randomised trial comparing dilatation and evacuation with the currently recommended regimen for MTOP (mifepristone/misoprostol) was abandoned because of poor recruitment. There is an urgent need to compare the acceptability and effectiveness of late abortion methods.
Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank all the nursing staff from the gynaecology ward and day-case theatre at the Royal Victoria Infirmary, particularly Jackie Tweddle, Stephanie Butler and Julie Davenport. Special thanks to the members of the Trial Steering Committee (Valerie Alasia, Jean Stafford, Simon Dixon, Dr Robbie Foy, Dr Maggie Redshaw, Dr Pamela Warner) and particularly Professor Alan Templeton for chairing the Committee. The authors would also like to thank Kathryn Oliver, Janine Gray, Professor Elaine McColl and Dr Diana Mansour for their helpful advice on the Trial Management Group, Sally Warburton for secretarial support and all the women who participated in the study.

Contributions of authors

First and final draft of report prepared by SC Robson. First draft of report (methods and results) prepared by T Kelly. Study design and statistical analysis prepared by D Howel. Design and analysis of DCE prepared by M Deverill. Design and discussion of psychological aspects prepared by J Hewison. Qualitative substudy (methods and results) prepared by MLS Lie. Statistical analysis prepared by E Stamp. Economic analysis prepared by N Armstrong.

Publication


24. Jensen JT, Harvey SM, Beckman LJ. Acceptability of suction curettage and mifepristone abortion in the


50. Stata Corporation. *Intercooled Stata 8.0 for Windows 98/95 NT.* College Station, TX: Stata Corporation; 2003.


Appendix 1

Information pamphlet
Termination of Pregnancy

Your Questions Answered (1)

Women’s Services Directorate
What will happen at the hospital clinic?

• You will be seen by a specialist nurse or doctor.

• They will take all your medical details, check your blood pressure and examine your abdomen (tummy).

• They will perform a scan through your abdomen to find out the size of the pregnancy. For this you need a full bladder.

• You will be asked if a swab can be taken from the neck of the womb (cervix) to see if there is an infection (chlamydia). This involves passing a speculum into the vagina (similar to having a smear).

• A blood sample will be taken to find out your blood group and to check you are not anaemic.

• You should be in the hospital clinic for no more than an hour.

• Remember; if your doctor has given you a letter please bring this to the clinic.

• You will be given a prescription for antibiotics to reduce the risk of infection. You should start these the day before the termination.

What methods of termination of pregnancy (abortion) are available?

Surgical

• Termination is undertaken by an operation under a general anaesthetic.

• You are admitted to the Day Unit (Ward 39) or the Gynaecology Ward (Ward 40) on the morning of operation.

• Before the operation it is necessary to insert some tablets (prostaglandin) into the vagina to prepare (soften) the cervix.

• A few hours later you will be taken to the operating theatre where an anaesthetic (injection) is given into the back of your hand.
• When you are asleep the cervix is gently opened and the pregnancy removed. The operation takes 5-10 minutes.

• Sometimes women experience crampy tummy pain just before or after the operation.

• Most women go home later the same day after they have recovered from the anaesthetic.

**Medical**

• You are admitted to the Gynaecology Ward (Ward 40).

• Termination is undertaken by tablets in two parts.

• The first part involves taking an oral tablet (Mifepristone) which helps prepare the womb by altering the hormone balance needed for the pregnancy to continue. This is usually given on the ward after you have been seen in the out-patient clinic. You can go home after taking this tablet.

• The second part involves coming into hospital 2 days later (at around 8.30 AM) when different tablets (prostaglandin) are inserted into the vagina. These stimulate the womb to expel the pregnancy.

• If the pregnancy is **less than nine weeks** size, abortion usually occurs within four hours of the tablets but if not, further prostaglandin tablets are given. You can go home 1-2 hours after passing the pregnancy providing you feel alright. There is a one in 10 chance that abortion does not occur before going home at 4.30 pm. This is not a problem but you may experience heavier bleeding and pain at home.

• If the pregnancy is **9 weeks or more**, further prostaglandin tablets are usually required. These are repeated until the pregnancy is passed. This may mean staying overnight. There is a 3-4 in 100 chance the tablets don’t work in which case you would be offered a surgical termination.

• Prior to passing the pregnancy it is usual to experience vaginal bleeding and crampy tummy pain. This tends to be worse in pregnancies over 9 weeks. Most women only need simple pain killers, but stronger injections are available if needed.

Which is the ‘best’ method of termination?
• At present there is insufficient evidence to be certain whether one method of termination is preferable. More research is needed to find out which method is most acceptable to women.

• Some women, especially during medical termination, feel sick and have vomiting and diarrhoea.

• Overall 3-5 out of every 100 women will experience pain and/or bleeding after a medical or surgical termination requiring them to seek medical advice. In about half of these cases, the termination is not complete, and an operation is necessary to empty the womb.

• More serious problems (such as severe infection or bleeding and damage to the womb) are much less common (less than 1 in 100 women).

• **We need your help to find out which method of termination is most acceptable to women in order that we can improve our services.** A research study is being carried out at the Royal Victoria Infirmary to find out more about women’s experiences of medical and surgical termination. You may be invited to take part. If so, this will be fully explained and it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part.

• The method of termination will be decided once you have spoken to the specialist nurse or doctor.
  It is helpful to keep an open mind until you have had the opportunity to discuss this.

What happens if I am undecided about the termination?

• The decision to terminate a pregnancy is always difficult. Some women remain undecided if this is the right option for them
• If you have doubts about whether to go through with the termination, it is important to share these with the specialist nurse or doctor
• Some women benefit from further counselling before they decide what to do. The important thing is to make the right decision and not feel rushed into doing something you really don’t want to do.

What about future contraception?

• It is important to have effective contraception
• The specialist nurse or doctor will discuss future contraception with you and there are information leaflets available in the clinic.
• Whatever contraceptive method you choose, we will ensure this is prescribed before you go home.
If you wish to cancel your appointment or you think you may be late please ring the Out Patients Department on 0191 2825900

Information written by Professor S. Robson
Review date February 2008
Appendix 2

Protocol – A randomised preference trial of medical versus surgical termination of pregnancy less than 14 weeks’ gestation

Protocol ID: TOP/SCR/002

Protocol version: 1

Date: 9 February 2005

EudraCT number: 2004-002920-17

1 Protocol contacts

Chief Investigator

Professor Stephen Robson, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, School of Surgical and Reproductive Sciences, 3rd Floor, William Leech Building, The Medical School, Framlington Place, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4HH. Tel: 0191 2824132

Statistician

Denise Howel, School of Population and Health Sciences, William Leech Building, The Medical School, Framlington Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4HH. Tel: 0191 2227381

Trial Manager

Kathryn Oliver, Clinical Trials Unit, Centre for Health Services Research, University of Newcastle, 21 Claremont Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4AA. Tel: 0191 222 7045 ext. 3816

2 Protocol signature page

2.1 Protocol authorisation signatories

Signature …………………….. Date …………

Denise Howel, Statistician

Signature …………………….. Date …………

Kathryn Oliver, Trial Manager

2.2 Chief investigator signature

I agree to comply with the study protocol, the principles of GCP and the appropriate reporting requirements.

Signature …………………….. Date …………

Professor Stephen Robson
3 Contents

1 Protocol contacts
2 Protocol signature page
3 Contents
4 Glossary
5 Protocol summary
6 Responsibilities
7 Background
8 Objectives
9 Study design
10 Subject population
11 Subject recruitment
12 Study interventions
13 Randomisation
14 Study data
15 Statistical considerations
16 Compliance and withdrawal
17 Data monitoring
18 Pharmacovigilance
19 Ethical considerations
20 Finance and insurance
21 Study reporting
22 References
23 Appendices

Appendix A Mifepristone summary of product characteristics
Appendix B Willingness to pay
Appendix C Satisfaction with care
Appendix D Experience of care
Appendix E Impact of Event Scale
Appendix F Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale
Appendix G Quality of Life Questionnaire (EQ-5D)

4 Glossary

AE Adverse Event
GA General Anaesthetic
GCP Good Clinical Practice
GP General Practitioner
HADS Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale
HTA Health Technology Assessment
IES Impact of Events Scale
IMP Investigational Medicinal Product
NHS National Health Service
PM Preference Medical
PS Preference Surgical
RCOG Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
RM Randomised Medical
RS Randomised Surgical
RVI Royal Victoria Infirmary
SAE Serious Adverse Event
SUSAR Serious Unexpected Suspected Adverse Reaction
TOP Termination of Pregnancy
WTP Willingness to Pay
5 Protocol summary

Full title: A randomised preference trial of medical versus surgical termination of pregnancy less than 14 weeks’ gestation

Short title: TOP study

Protocol version: 1

Protocol date: 9 February 2004

Chief investigator: Professor Stephen Robson

Sponsor: Department of Health, Research and Development, Health Technology Assessment Programme

Funder: Department of Health, Research and Development, Health Technology Assessment Programme

Study design: A partially randomised preference trial comparing surgical and medical termination of pregnancy up to 14 weeks’ gestation. Follow-up will be conducted at 2 weeks and 3 months

Study intervention: Surgical or medical termination of pregnancy

Objectives: To determine differences in efficacy, acceptability and cost

Primary outcome: Acceptability, determined by preferred method of a future variable: termination

Study site: Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle upon Tyne

Study population: 2232 eligible women

Study duration: 3 years

6 Responsibilities

Sponsor

Department of Health, R&D, Health Technology Assessment Programme

Trial management

The following functions falling under the responsibility of the sponsor will be delegated to the Newcastle Clinical Trials Unit.

- Authorisation: including CTA request, research ethics committee opinion, notification of protocol amendments and the end of trial.
- GCP and conduct: including GCP arrangements, management of IMP (free of charge), emergency and safety procedures.
- Pharmacovigilance: including defining adverse events/reactions, reporting of SUSARs, notifying investigators of SUSARs, annual listings and safety report.

Trial conduct at site

Investigator responsibilities:

- Study conduct and the welfare of study subjects.
- Familiar with the use of the investigational medicinal product as described in the product information, administration according to the protocol and drug accountability.
- Compliance with the protocol, documentation of any protocol deviations and reporting of all serious adverse events.
- Screening and recruitment of subjects.
- All trial-related medical decisions.
- Provision of adequate medical care in the event of an adverse event.
- Obtaining site-specific assessment from local ethics committee:
  - Assistance will be provided by the CTU.
- Obtaining R&D approval from the appropriate Trust and abide by the policies of research governance.
- Compliance with the principles of GCP.
- Obtain written informed consent from participants prior to their participation.
- Qualified by education, training and experience to assume responsibility for the proper conduct of the trial and shall provide a current signed and dated curriculum vitae as evidence.
- Availability for study meetings and in the case of an audit.
• Maintenance of study documentation and compliance with reporting requests:
  – Maintaining a project file, including copies of study approval, list of subjects and their signed informed consent forms.
  – Documenting delegation of tasks to study personnel, e.g. co-investigators, research nurse.
  – Ensure data collected is accurate and complete.
  – Updating the CTU regarding the progress of the trial.
  – Ensure subject confidentiality is maintained during the project and archival period.

• Ensure archival of study documentation for a minimum of 12 years following the end of the study, unless local arrangements require a longer period.

7 Background

Unwanted pregnancy is a major health issue; worldwide an estimated 53 million abortions are performed each year, resulting in up to 100,000 maternal deaths.\(^1\) In 2002 nearly 185,000 pregnancy terminations were performed in England and Wales of which 78% were funded by the NHS. The majority of abortions are performed before 13 weeks of pregnancy (87%) and by surgical methods (86%).\(^2\) In 2000, 64 of 194 (33%) units with facilities for termination of pregnancy before 13 weeks provided both medical and surgical methods, while among the 130 units with only one method available, surgical termination of pregnancy was the only option in 79%.\(^3\) Prior to 14 weeks’ gestation surgical termination can be performed by vacuum aspiration (VA). This procedure, performed under general anaesthesia, has been the ‘method of choice’ since the 1960s; VA is currently used in 81% of abortions performed prior to 10 weeks’ gestation and 92% of those performed at 10–12 weeks.\(^4\) The technique is safe and efficacious; major complications (uterine perforation, pelvic sepsis and haemorrhage requiring blood transfusion) occur in 0.2–0.9% of cases.\(^5,6\) However, up to 5% of women return to hospital with post-abortion symptoms, of which 50–65% require surgical evacuation for retained products.\(^4,5\) Complication rates increase with gestation,\(^4,6\) with incomplete abortion reported in up to 12% of cases ≥12 weeks.\(^5\) Cervical preparation with prostaglandins facilitates cervical dilatation and reduces complications.\(^5\) It is recommended, if the woman is under 18 years of age or at gestation >10 weeks, using misoprostol 400µg vaginally 3 hours prior to surgery.\(^7\)

Medical abortion using mifepristone, an anti-progesterone, and prostaglandins has been available since the 1980s. For abortions up to 63 days’ gestation, evidence suggests that mifepristone (200 mg orally) followed 36–48 hours later by either gemeprost (1 mg vaginally) or misoprostol (800µg vaginally) are equally safe and effective, with 95–97.5% of women achieving complete abortion.\(^6,8\) Because of much lower costs, 72% of units use misoprostol.\(^3\) Complete abortion rates with single-dose mifepristone/misoprostol fall from 98.5% at ≤49 days to 96.7% at 50–63 days\(^8\) but are much greater after 63 days.\(^9\) For women at 49–63 days, if abortion has not occurred 4 hours after administration of misoprostol, a second dose (400µg vaginally or orally) may be administered.\(^7\)

Between 64 and 91 days’ gestation, efficacy is increased if the initial dose of misoprostol is followed by repeated doses of 400µg.\(^12\) However, even using up to a maximum of five further doses, the need for surgical evacuation increased from 0.9% at 9–10 weeks to 7.9% at 12–13 weeks.\(^12\)

A Cochrane systematic review of medical versus surgical methods of first trimester termination of pregnancy identified only five relevant trials, mostly with small numbers.\(^13\) Although the authors concluded that prostaglandins alone seemed to be less effective than surgical abortion, only one trial of mifepristone/prostaglandins was included.\(^14\) The review suggested there was inadequate evidence to comment on the acceptability and side effects of medical versus surgical abortions. A partially randomised preference trial of medical and surgical termination of pregnancy between 10 and 13 weeks has subsequently been reported.\(^15\) Side effects (vomiting, diarrhoea and abdominal pain) were higher in the medical group, although there was no difference in the rates of major complications up to 8 weeks.

Available evidence suggests that 17–85% of women requesting first-trimester termination of pregnancy have a preference for either a medical or surgical procedure.\(^15,16\) The most common reason cited for preferring a medical termination of pregnancy is the avoidance of surgery and/or anaesthesia.\(^13,17\) The large variation in reported preference rates may be explained by factors such as gestational age, prior experience and time to access the procedure.\(^15,16,18\) Preference for surgical termination of pregnancy appears to increase with gestational age;\(^14,15\) early in pregnancy women appear to perceive the medical procedure as easier and more natural while later it is perceived as more stressful (related to concerns about pain and
aspiration was also rated less painful in women allocated according to preference.

The psychological effects of termination of pregnancy have recently been reviewed. The authors concluded that termination of pregnancy rarely causes immediate or lasting negative psychological consequences in healthy women. Indeed several studies reported positive outcomes such as relief. Henshaw et al. performed a partially randomised preference trial of termination of pregnancy < 9 weeks and found no differences in depression, anxiety or low self-esteem 2 weeks after the procedure but, in a much smaller number, 2 years later. Whether medical termination of pregnancy is associated with more adverse psychological consequences after 9 weeks' gestation is not known.

Although many studies have reported the outcomes of first-trimester termination of pregnancy, very few have randomised the method of abortion, and only one has included women beyond 9 weeks of pregnancy, despite the fact this group constitutes over 40% of termination of pregnancies. There is a need for a partially randomised preference trial comparing VA with current methods of medical abortion. In addition to patient acceptability the trial needs to determine the clinical and cost effectiveness of the two methods.

In 2002 a pilot randomised trial of medical versus surgical termination in women at ≥9 weeks' gestation was commenced at the Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI), Newcastle upon Tyne. Women not expressing a preference for one method were randomised to medical or surgical termination of pregnancy. All women were offered follow-up at 2 weeks post procedure. Due to limited availability of the research nurse, recruitment was only possible from selected clinics.

Of 408 women at 9–13 weeks, 284 (70%) were suitable and agreed to participate in research, of which 139 (49%) were prepared to be randomised to medical or surgical termination of pregnancy. Outcome data at 2 weeks was obtained in 75 (53%) and included emergency admission rates, psychological scales (Impact of Event Scale, Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale) and satisfaction with care. The pilot study information has been used to inform recruitment and precision calculations for the proposed trial.

During the pilot study women were divided into two gestational age groups: 9–13 weeks and
14–20 weeks based on ultrasound. Methods of medical and surgical termination of pregnancy in the 9–13 week group were identical to those proposed in the present application. Psychological impact was measured using the Impact of Event Scale (IES) and Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS). Clinical outcome was measured using blood loss (as determined by drop in haemoglobin), unplanned (emergency) admission and symptoms (pain, diarrhoea, vomiting and vaginal bleeding). A follow-up visit at the Royal Victoria Infirmary was arranged for all women in the trial and key outcomes collected at this point by clinical enquiry and questionnaire. Updated data on recruitment and follow-up (as at March 2004) indicated that for the 9–13 week group, data on IES at 2 weeks post procedure was available from a total of 65% of randomised women. Statistical analysis of the psychological and clinical data has not been undertaken.

There is some indication that the follow-up rate (using clinic visits and selected telephone contact) is lower in the surgical arm. This could be explained by women undergoing a surgical termination of pregnancy feeling less in need of reassurance about the termination of pregnancy outcome, and therefore being less willing to attend the follow-up visit. However, a 95% confidence interval for the difference in follow-up rates between arms is 2% to 31%, i.e. the data are consistent with either a difference of little or of real practical importance. Telephone follow-up was only used for the latter part of the pilot study, and we anticipate that we can obtain key outcome data in all arms for a greater proportion of women in future by offering a choice by way of place and method of follow-up.

There is a clear policy impetus to understand, qualitatively, women’s preferences for medical or surgical termination of pregnancy and the decision-making processes that lead both to these preferences and to encounters with health services. The personal and political sensitivities that surround termination of pregnancy are now well established, and have important consequences for research in the field. The most important of these is resistance to inquiry into decision-making and action where this may threaten the moral viability of the woman’s decisions. This means although termination of pregnancy is one of the most common surgical procedures in the UK, little work has been done that will contribute to robust understanding of preferences for types of procedures, and even less qualitative work that has investigated this problem. Instead, the objective of much research in the field has been aimed at understanding decision-making on termination in relation to promoting access or reducing delays in referral to clinical services. Recently, this approach has led to an important qualitative study in the UK. In this study, Kumar et al.\textsuperscript{24,25} have shown that most women prefer not to discuss their decision with clinicians, but prefer instead to receive information and prompt referral. Unease about discussing personal aspects of termination has also been registered amongst professionals, especially nurses and midwives (this may also explain the paucity of social science research in the field).\textsuperscript{26} Factors affecting the choice of method of termination are already known to be highly complex, and organised mainly in relation to social rather than clinical factors.\textsuperscript{27} The problem of decision-making and preferences around termination is therefore quite unlike any other arena of clinical research, especially other areas where approaches to shared decision-making have become prominent in recent years.\textsuperscript{28}

The personal and professional sensitivities around termination of pregnancy require a highly sensitive approach to research. In this trial of surgical versus medical termination, women’s preferences and responses are being intensively investigated through measures of experiences of care; strength of preference; psychological outcomes; cost-effectiveness; satisfaction with care; and also by clinical measures of morbidity including experience of symptoms and emergency admission.

The intensive investigation of women’s experiences and preferences within the trial provides a point of departure for the qualitative substudy. This will draw on data collected within the economic substudy of strength of preferences, and is an optional final phase of the trial experienced by a subgroup of 32 women. Qualitative substudies within trials tend to be used either as initial (reconnaissance) studies to assist in decision-making about instrument design, study organisation and recruitment; or as formative process evaluations of ongoing work.\textsuperscript{29} In the present study, we intend to take a different tack, using the qualitative investigation as a means of illuminating women’s responses to (1) the experience of participating in the trial, and (2) their perspectives on the results of the economic study of strength of preference. Directly focusing on these topics will provide useful data, but will also indirectly open up earlier decision-making processes and questions of access to investigation.
A key problem in qualitative studies of personally sensitive experiences and actions is that of the subject being forced to construct an account that provides a justification for action in the face of anticipated moral judgements by an external authority; this makes for bias in accounts and we have adopted an approach to study design and data collection that is explicitly intended to move the focus of subjects’ accounts away from personal justification towards a wider explanatory perspective. We will do this by asking subjects to act as lay interpreters of data collected elsewhere in the study (refer to conjoint analysis, section 15), focusing on the preferences and actions of ‘notional others’ and to use this interpretive function as a starting point for their own accounts. This approach means that its design and application do not risk confounding recruitment and retention of subjects, or other data collection, where these are already likely to be a challenge.

8 Objectives

This is a non-commercial study to determine the acceptability, efficacy and cost of medical versus surgical termination of pregnancy.

Primary objectives
To determine the acceptability of medical and surgical termination procedures as determined by their preferred method for any future TOP.

Secondary objectives
To compare experiences of care, strength of preference, psychological impact, efficacy and cost-effectiveness of surgical versus medical termination.

Qualitative substudy
The aim of the substudy is to better understand the foundations of women’s preferences and decision-making about method of termination. The objectives are:

1. to identify, describe and understand women’s motives for joining the trial and their experiences of participation in it
2. to identify, describe and understand women’s personal experiences of seeking termination and decision-making about method of termination
3. to identify, describe and understand women’s perspectives on data collected on ‘strength of preference’ and the model developed from conjoint economic analysis.

9 Study design

This is a partially randomised controlled preference trial comparing two procedures for termination of pregnancy at less than 14 weeks’ gestation. Termination can be performed surgically (the uterus is evacuated under general anaesthetic) or medically (tablets given to procure abortion); it is unclear which of these methods is more acceptable to women. This design ensures the inclusion of women who have a prior procedure preference (preference group) and those who do not (randomised group), and will therefore reflect the population of a normal clinical setting.

Primary outcome measures
The primary outcome variable is acceptability of the procedure at 2 weeks after the procedure; participants will be asked if they would have the same method of termination again.

Secondary outcome measures
A secondary comparison of acceptability of the procedure will also be determined at 3 months after the procedure. Additional secondary outcome variables are strength of preference for the procedure, measured after 2 weeks; experiences of care, psychological impact, efficacy and satisfaction with care, measured at 2 weeks and 3 months after the termination procedure.

Further analysis will be performed to explore the relationships between willingness to pay, satisfaction and acceptability measures.

In order to better understand women’s decisions regarding termination of pregnancy the study will include a qualitative component. A conceptual model of preferences will be developed via conjoint analysis in a group of non-pregnant women, and then explored via interview in a sample of women who have participated in the trial 2 weeks after their termination procedure.
The study involves up to three hospital visits; the third visit is currently only part of normal care for those patients where it is unclear if medical abortion has been complete or who are experiencing problems. However, the RCOG has recently recommended that all women should be offered a follow-up appointment within 2 weeks of abortion.7

Alternative methods of collecting the primary and secondary outcome data will be discussed at baseline to ensure maximum follow-up.

- The third visit can be performed in a community clinic (based within sexual and reproductive health services), rather than the hospital setting.
- If participants fail to attend the 2-week follow-up visit, contact and data collection will be attempted by telephone, followed by postal questionnaire (with an option to complete the questionnaire via the internet). Also if agreeable, a final option of text message will be used to elicit primary outcome data; text messaging may also be used for a visit reminder.
- 3-month follow-up data will be collected via postal or web-based questionnaire.

From month 10 of recruitment, 32 women (8 from each arm) will be invited to join the qualitative substudy during the 2-week follow-up visit. A convenient time will be arranged by the researcher to perform this interview.

**Definition of end of study**

The end of the study will be the last participant’s final study contact, at 3-months follow-up.

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a Only determined prior to procedure in the preference group.
10 Subject population
This is a single-site study and will be conducted at the RVI in Newcastle upon Tyne, a busy NHS unit which undertakes nearly 1300 terminations a year. A total of 2232 women requesting termination of pregnancy are required for inclusion into the study.

10.1 Inclusion criteria
• Women requesting and accepted for termination of pregnancy at less than 14 weeks’ gestation (as determined by ultrasound).
• Women under 16 years of age will be approached where they are determined to be Gillick competent (by the clinical practitioner) and where a parent/legal representative is present.
• Ability to give written informed consent.

10.2 Exclusion criteria
• Pre-existing medical disorder which is an indication for either medical or surgical TOP.
• Non-English-speaking women (apart from French, Mandarin, Cantonese, Bengali, Urdu and Arabic) due to limited availability of interpreters.
• Previous participation in this trial.
• Current participation in a ‘drug’ related trial.

Substudy
This sample is neither intended to be statistically representative nor to be a maximum variation sample; sampling will be purposive and sequential. Every woman entering the trial in the period after 10 months recruitment will be invited to join the qualitative substudy at 2-week follow-up. We expect a high rate of refusal to join this substudy and of attrition amongst those who do. This means that although inclusion and exclusion criteria will be the same as those for the main trial, the sample entering the qualitative substudy will be highly selected.

11 Subject recruitment
At the time of referral, all women are provided with standard hospital information about the choices and risks of termination of pregnancy. This information leaflet explicitly states that there is no medical evidence that one method of termination is ‘better’ than the other and research is currently being conducted at the RVI to better inform this choice. For reasons of confidentiality the study information sheet will not be sent to women prior to their consultation visit.

The initial consultation at the unit involves acceptance for termination and discussion of choices and risks. A nurse practitioner will discuss the available options and risks of termination, and then those women eligible for the study will be approached for interest in the study. Interested women will then discuss the study in detail with a research nurse and discuss their preference options. Written study information will be provided, along with opportunity for questions and time to consider the study. Willing participants will sign a consent form along with the research nurse, and confirm their decision for randomisation or preference for a medical or surgical termination.

For those women less than 16 years of age (minor), a parent or legal representative shall also have the study explained and have opportunity to ask questions. The parent or legal representative will provide written consent at the same time as and in addition to the minor’s consent. For the purposes of this study, a suitable legal representative would be a close relative: sibling (age > 16), aunt/uncle or grandparent.

Unaccompanied women, or accompanied women with unsuitable representatives, of less than 16 years will not be considered for the study.
12 Study interventions

12.1 General information
Termination of pregnancy (TOP) is the commonest gynaecological procedure. It can be performed surgically or medically as described in section 1 (Background).

Vaginal bleeding and mild abdominal pain are normal post surgical and medical procedure. Nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea may also be experienced. There is also a risk of infection. Pain relief and antibiotics are provided as part of normal care. Occasionally abortion is incomplete and surgical evacuation is required. Major complications of surgical termination are rare, but include uterine perforation, pelvic sepsis and haemorrhage.

Misoprostol is widely used in the UK to induce medical abortion and in cervical preparation for surgical termination, even though this is an unlicensed indication. Therefore for the purposes of this study misoprostol will be treated as an investigational medicinal product (IMP).

The Summary of Product Characteristics for mifepristone is included in Appendix A. This will be prescribed and administered as per normal practice.

12.2 Use within the study
Misoprostol will be presented as 200-µg tablets, packaged and labelled as an IMP.

Surgical termination
Women will be admitted to the Surgical Day Unit where they will receive misoprostol 400 µg vaginally 3 hours prior to the estimated time of surgery. Following induction of general anaesthesia and mechanical dilatation of the cervix, the uterus will be evacuated using vacuum aspiration with a 9–12 mm curette. In the absence of excessive bleeding or other problems, women will be discharged 1–2 hours after the procedure.

In line with RCOG recommendations, surgical termination will only be performed after 6 weeks’ gestation because of the high failure rate (relative risk 2.9) at very early gestations. The appointment for surgical termination will be timed in line with this recommendation.

Medical termination
At an initial appointment participants will be given mifepristone 200 mg orally on the gynaecological ward by the nursing staff. After 36–48 hours, they will be admitted to the gynaecological ward where they will receive misoprostol 800 µg vaginally at approximately 8.30 a.m. Following administration of misoprostol, participants will receive oral paracetamol (500 mg) plus dihydrocodeine (10 mg) or diclofenac (75 mg), or parental diamorphine (5 mg) as required and as per normal practice. At the time of the termination participants will receive rectal metronidazole (1 g), followed by oral doxycycline (200 mg) daily for 7 days, commencing on the day of the termination. In the absence of excessive bleeding, participants will be discharged 1–2 hours after passage of the uterine contents.

Subsequent management will depend on gestation period.

Less than 9 weeks
• If the contents of the uterus have not been passed 4 hours after misoprostol administration, a second dose of misoprostol (400 µg) will be administered vaginally or orally (depending on preference and amount of bleeding).
• Subsequently, if abortion does not occur and bleeding is not excessive, women will be routinely discharged between 4.30 and 5.00 p.m. The abortion occurs at home and women return for follow-up after 2 weeks.

9–13 weeks
• If the contents of the uterus have not been passed 3 hours after misoprostol administration, further doses of misoprostol (400 µg) will be given vaginally (or orally if bleeding is heavy) at 3-hour intervals up to a maximum of four further doses.
• If the contents are still not passed, an ultrasound scan will be performed. In cases of an ongoing pregnancy, missed or incomplete abortion, surgical evacuation will be performed.
13 Randomisation

Participants with a procedure preference will decide whether to opt for a medical or surgical termination. Participants with no preference, and willing to be allocated a procedure at random, will be randomised using a computer system with web-based access for trial personnel (PowerTrial). Randomisation will be stratified according to gestation (< 9 weeks and between 9 and 13 weeks) and for previous termination of pregnancy.

14 Study data

14.1 Data collection

Baseline demographic data, including medical history and method of any previous termination, education level, occupation and income, will be collected by the nurse practitioner or research nurse for all participants. Contact details (including where possible mobile phone numbers) and availability will also be collected.

Those expressing a procedure preference at baseline will be asked to nominate one or more reasons from a list of eight, developed as part of the pilot trial.

1. General anaesthetic (GA): want to be asleep (PS).
2. Fear of GA or desire to be awake and in control (PM).
3. Fetus: do not want to see fetus (PS).
4. Pain: perceived medical as more painful (PS).
5. Visits to hospital: wanted minimum (PS).
6. Duration of procedure: less time in hospital (PS).
7. Previous experience (i.e. had prior TOP): PM or PS.
8. Other (< 5% of responses).

All participants will be invited to return for an outpatient (hospital or community clinic) assessment 2 weeks after the procedure. Outcome data will be collected at 2 weeks (by interview and questionnaire) and at 3 months (by questionnaire) after the procedure. For women who do not attend their visit for 2-week follow-up, collection of outcome data will be attempted where previously agreed via telephone interview, mobile text message and postal or web-based questionnaire. All visits and telephone interviews will be conducted by a research nurse.

Acceptability

This will be determined at 2 weeks and 3 months after the procedure by responses to the closed question ‘If you ever have another termination of pregnancy, would you opt for the same method?’ This simple question has been used in previous preference trials of TOP\textsuperscript{14,15} and can, if necessary, be easily determined by phone or text message.

Strength of preference

To measure women’s strength of preference for medical or surgical termination we will measure willingness to pay. This technique is being increasingly used in health technology assessment\textsuperscript{32} and has been used previously for assessing strength of preference for abortion method.\textsuperscript{23,33} Interviews will be conducted, using the payment card method,\textsuperscript{31} in all women in the preference arm prior to the procedure where they will be asked to state their maximum ‘willingness to pay’ amount for the termination method they have chosen. Interviews will also be conducted on all women in both the randomised and preference arms at 2 weeks after the procedure when they will be asked to state their maximum ‘willingness to pay’ amount to receive their preferred option at a future date. The validity of women’s responses will be tested by examining the correlation between stated ‘willingness to pay’ and level of income.

Satisfaction with care

The methodological pitfalls of measuring satisfaction with care have been reviewed recently.\textsuperscript{35} Women will be asked to rate the quality of care during the termination and the counselling and support afterwards using a 5-point Likert scale (from excellent to poor) at 2 weeks and 3 months after the procedure. Measures in which patients are asked to rate the quality of aspects of their care show greater response variability than measures which seek direct ratings of satisfaction\textsuperscript{36} and are better predictors of whether patients will return to the same doctor in the future.\textsuperscript{36} For analysis we will distinguish those who rate their care as excellent from the remainder as this provides better discrimination.\textsuperscript{37} A similar assessment has been used in our pilot trial. Ratings of care will be supplemented by information on satisfaction with care from the qualitative study.

Experience of care

To provide information about the reasons underlying acceptability judgements, we will use a semantic differential rating technique administered at 2 weeks and 3 months post procedure. This instrument uses a pair of opposite adjectives (for example, ‘painless–painful’) as end points on a graphic Likert scale. Women will be asked to indicate their experience by placing a mark on
the scale. Twelve bipolar adjectives will be used, scored along an evaluation dimension representing a positive or negative attitude ranging from 3 to –3. Rating scores are quick and easy to complete and have been used previously to measure attitude towards termination of pregnancy.14,38

We plan to undertake a further analysis to explore the relationships between willingness to pay, satisfaction and acceptability measures.

Distress, anxiety and depression
Distress will be measured using the IES at 2 weeks and 3 months after the procedure. This 15-item scale measures subjective distress to a specific event (in this case termination of pregnancy)39 and is the most likely to pick up a difference in actual experience of having one procedure rather than another. Two subscales measure intrusion and avoidance and both are likely to arise differently from the procedures under comparison. Anxiety and depression will be measured using the HADS at 2 weeks and 3 months after the procedure. This is a widely used 14-item self-report scale designed for medical patients.40 Depression is the main problem service providers have been concerned about.21 Both the IES and HADS have been used in women after termination of pregnancy21–23 and in our pilot study.

Quality of Life (EQ-5D)
This is a six-itemed validated questionnaire developed by a European committee to provide a preference-based measure of quality of life, needed for the economic evaluation.41

Emergency admission
Efficacy will be determined by comparing the rates of emergency admission (on the day of the procedure or after discharge) at 2 weeks and 3 months after the procedure. All women will be questioned about adverse events at the 2-week and 3-month follow-up to ensure that data are also captured for admissions or visits to another hospital or their GP. The rationale for choosing this outcome is that it is likely to include all women with significant procedure-related morbidity due to (1) incomplete abortion, missed abortion or ongoing pregnancy (all of which require surgical evacuation) and (2) pelvic infection without retained products of conception. Further there is evidence to suggest that women experiencing a failed termination (requiring surgical evacuation) or excessive pain and/or bleeding (resulting in admission) are more likely to classify the experience as unsatisfactory42 and to opt not to have the same procedure again in the future.20,42

Frequency and extent of symptoms
The incidence of nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, dizziness and abdominal pain on the day of the procedure will be recorded as well as an assessment of the severity of pain (using a 10-cm visual analogue scale) and analgesic use. Symptoms after discharge will be ascertained at the 2-week follow-up visit by the research nurse. Specifically the duration and severity of vaginal bleeding and pain as well as the length of time taken off work and to return to normal activity will be recorded.15

Concomitant medications will be recorded at baseline and at the time of the termination procedure by abstraction from the medical notes. Women will be asked about concomitant medications at 2-week follow-up.

Substudy
Semi-structured interviews: 32 participants will be invited to take part in one semi-structured interview with a trained interviewer. The highly selected nature of the sample, and the topic sensitivity, mean that decision-making and experiences of termination will be their indirect rather than direct focus. Interviews will be of up to 90 minutes duration and will be divided into two discrete sections.

In part 1 women will be asked about general issues connected with their experience of entering and participating in the trial, and their understanding of its design and methods. This part of the interview will indirectly elicit accounts of their experience of referral pathways into the service and trial, specific accounts of their experiences of termination, and its outcome.

In part 2 the interviewer will describe and demonstrate outcomes of a conjoint analysis (refer to section 15) using structured questions and flashcards. Subjects will be invited to comment on the model derived from conjoint analysis from the perspective of a ‘notional other’,31 and will also be asked about the ‘fit’ between the ‘willingness to pay’ model and their own experiences.

With the consent of the participant, each interview will be audio-recorded using an unobtrusive mini-disk recorder and conference microphone, and later transcribed. Where participants do not consent to recording, handwritten notes will be made.
14.2 Data handling

Study data collected will be entered directly, where possible, to avoid transcription errors, into a web-based PowerTrial data capture system by the research nurse, or participant for the web-based questionnaires. The remaining study data will be entered from paper source. Audit trail and full daily back-up will be provided.

Data will be collected to standards required by CFR Title 21, part 11, and EU Directive 2001/20/EC, and adhere to the Data Protection Act 1998.

The quality and retention of study data will be the responsibility of the Newcastle Clinical Trials Unit. All study data will be archived in line with current University policy (currently 12 years).

15 Statistical considerations

15.1 Statistical analysis

The analysis strategy will be similar to that used in a partially randomised preference trial of treatment for depression. The trial will contain four intervention groups:

1. randomised to medical termination (RM)
2. randomised to surgical termination (RS)
3. preference for medical termination (PM)
4. preference for surgical termination (PS).

The analysis will be on an intention-to-treat basis (although it is anticipated that women will always get the randomised or preferred intervention). Those in either medical arm (RM or PM) who subsequently receive surgical intervention, due to incomplete or missed abortion, will be analysed as per the assigned medical arm.

Baseline variables: although randomisation should balance out baseline characteristics, it will be important to compare these in the four groups to see if those who are prepared to be randomised differ from those who have a preference. If so, there are problems in extrapolating any conclusions from the randomised arms to the general population.

Primary analysis

Main comparison of randomised arms
1. Comparison of proportions of women finding the procedure acceptable. We will also investigate the interaction between past history of TOP and intervention group on acceptability and gestational age (as a continuous variable) and intervention group on acceptability.

2. Comparison of mean values on psychological and rating scales.
3. Comparison of proportions of women rating care as ‘excellent’.
4. Comparison of WTP between those women in the two randomised groups.

Secondary analysis

Secondary comparison of medical and surgical arms (preference and randomised subgroups combined)
1. Comparison of proportions of women finding the procedure acceptable and rating the quality of care as ‘excellent’: the comparison will adjust for key baseline variables using logistic regression. We will also investigate the interaction between past history of TOP and intervention group on acceptability, and gestational age (as a continuous variable) and intervention group on acceptability.
2. Comparison of mean values of psychological and rating scales: the comparison will adjust for key baseline variables using multiple regression.
3. Comparison of proportions of women with emergency admission and particular symptoms: the comparison will adjust for key baseline variables using logistic regression.
4. Comparison of WTP between those women in the combined groups.

Tertiary comparison of combined preference and randomised groups

The aim of this comparison is to determine if receiving a preferred intervention improves key outcomes. Comparisons will be of acceptability, psychological and rating scales with methods as for secondary comparisons.

Cost-effectiveness analysis

Cost data relating NHS resource use (in both primary and secondary care) will be collected following established methods up to 3 months post termination for both surgical and medical interventions. This will include data relating to the initial procedure, hospital stay, follow-up care as inpatients, any additional interventions and outpatient appointments. Data relating to GP consultations specifically for follow-up care relating to the TOP will be collected using the postal questionnaire at 3 months and, if agreed previously, by telephone where this is not returned. Data relating to secondary and primary follow-up care and any interventions required will be used to compare the burden placed on the patient’s own resources when using either medical or surgical termination. The cost-effectiveness analysis will be
expressed as the cost per successfully completed termination. Extensive one-way and multivariate sensitivity analysis will be undertaken in the analysis of the final results.45

Clinical effectiveness analysis
Previous studies have used a variety of measures of clinical effectiveness but emphasis has been placed on failed TOP (with an ongoing viable pregnancy), incomplete abortion and presumed pelvic infection. Based on our proposed sample size, the precision with which we could detect differences in each of these complications is limited. Hence we have opted to use a combined measure of effectiveness which captures unplanned time spent in hospital, a key outcome for women.

Our definition of ‘emergency admission’ includes:

1. unplanned overnight stay on the day of termination
2. emergency hospital assessment or admission after discharge.

All cases of incomplete abortion, missed abortion, ongoing pregnancy (all of which require surgical evacuation) and pelvic infection without retained products of conception will therefore be included in this outcome. A very small number of women may be admitted to other units but we would anticipate collecting clinical outcome data from their hospital discharge summary and/or via our follow-up.

Qualitative substudy
Conjoint analysis or discrete choice experiment
In order to identify the key factors that shape women's preferences for termination services we will conduct a discrete choice experiment (DCE). This technique measures the strength of individual's preferences for the various attributes of a clinical intervention46 and has been successfully used in research relating to the provision of services for women.47 Interviews will be conducted with a sample of 100 non-pregnant women recruited from local contraception/sexual health clinics. Women will first be asked if they are interested in participating in a research interview, before provision of an information sheet, an informed discussion and written consent. These interviews will begin prior to recruitment for the main study. Previous research suggests this sample size should be adequate to provide precise parameter estimates with the number of attributes and choices we will use.48 This sampling frame has been chosen to reduce the data collection burden on the trial sample and to avoid interference with women in the trial forming and stating preferences.

Qualitative analysis
We will use a model of preference developed from the discrete choice experiment as the basis for a semi-structured interview with 32 women (8 from each of the four groups: preference surgical, preference medical, randomised surgical and randomised medical). A conventional model of qualitative analysis will be used.49 The analytic product of this work will be (1) a comparative model of preferences and their normative constraints and (2) a model of contextual features that affect decision-making about termination of pregnancy.

Interview transcripts will form the formal data for analysis. Following the conventional model of constant comparative analysis of transcribed data set,49 transcripts will be interpreted iteratively, developing themes (or categories) within respondents’ discourse. To facilitate qualitative analysis, and to provide an audit trail for governance purposes, we will use QSR software to manage data transcripts, coding and memoing. Initial thematic analysis will be conducted by the qualitative researcher. Transcripts will be searched for common themes and deviant cases (in relation to part 1 of the interview). Themes will be indexed (as 'codes') and searches for discrete instances of codeable items of speech will be undertaken in both cumulative comparisons (i.e. between interviews in the same arm of the trial) and condition comparisons (i.e. across interviews gathered from different arms of the trial). This will provide a robust account of the common themes relating to women’s responses of joining and participating in the trial, and these themes (and deviant cases) will be recorded in a simple frame.50 Because part 2 of each interview will involve some structured questions (and flashcards showing simple histograms of quantitative data), direct thematic comparisons will be made across a range of responses, and some simple quantification of results will also be possible. Once initial analysis has been undertaken by the qualitative researcher, qualitative inter-rater checking will be undertaken on a sample of cumulative and condition comparisons. This will add value to analysis51 and will enable secure claims about the quality of data to be made.
15.2 Sample size calculation

The power of the study is based on the main comparison of acceptability between women randomised to medical or surgical TOP. Assuming the acceptability of medical termination to be 75%, we would need responses from 335 women in each randomised arm to detect a difference in acceptability of 10% (i.e. from 75% to 85%) with a significance level of 5% and power of 90%. We believe this difference in the level of acceptability is important for both consumers and providers; a similar difference was employed by Ashok et al. in their large randomised comparison of abortion methods.

Based on the power calculation we need primary outcome data on 670 women randomised to medical or surgical TOP at <14 weeks’ gestation. In order to achieve this number we calculated:

1. 1116 women need to be randomised (assuming 40% of women randomised fail to attend for follow-up and primary outcome data are therefore not available)
2. 2232 women need to be recruited (assuming 50% of women agreeing to participate in the study have a preference for medical or surgical TOP and are therefore not suitable for randomisation)
3. 3188 women need to be approached (assuming 30% of women accepted for TOP will decline involvement in the study).

Justification for assumptions

All three assumptions were based on our experience from an earlier pilot trial conducted at the RVI involving women requesting TOP at 9–13 weeks’ gestation. For reasons detailed in Kumar et al. we believe our assumption of 60% follow-up is conservative. Further, previous trials conducted in the UK have reported that 54%14 and 82%15 of recruited women undergoing TOP at <9 weeks and 9–13 weeks respectively were prepared to have their method of TOP determined by randomisation. Thus our estimate of 50% may also be conservative. The proportions of women accepted for TOP who agreed to join these two randomised preference trials were not reported. Data from non-randomised studies conducted in the UK suggest 87–93% of similar women are prepared to participate in studies involving follow-up (including psychological questionnaires) after TOP, suggesting our assumption of 70% (based on the pilot study) is realistic.

16 Compliance and withdrawal

In order to increase the proportion of participants returning for follow-up after 2 weeks, an option to attend a community clinic has been incorporated in the design, thus allowing ease of access and evening appointments.

A range of contact processes are also included to maximise capture of primary and secondary data where participants fail to attend the 2-week follow-up visit. These include telephone contact (up to two attempts) for all participants to capture the primary variable, and postal questionnaires or a web-based questionnaire option. For agreeable participants text messaging will be used for a visit reminder at week 2 and collection of the primary variable (up to two attempts).

Following reasonable attempts to capture data and non-response, participants will be considered lost to follow-up. Participants who withdraw their consent following the procedure will not be replaced.

17 Data monitoring

17.1 Discontinuation rules

The trial may be prematurely discontinued on the basis of new safety information, or for other reasons given by the Trial Steering Committee (see below), regulatory authority or ethics committee concerned.

17.2 Monitoring, quality control and assurance

The trial will be managed through the Clinical Trials Unit (CTU), University of Newcastle in accordance with the EU Trials Directive, the Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care and MRC Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice in Clinical Trials. Professor S. Robson will have overall responsibility for the day-to-day conduct of the trial supported by the nurse coordinator, CTU Trial Manager and Trial Management group (TMG). The TMG will include the principal investigators, co-applicants and nurse representation.

The Trial Steering Committee (TSC) will be chaired by Professor Alan Templeton, University of Aberdeen, to include two other independent members and two lay members. It is proposed the TSC will meet twice during the first year of the trial and then annually. Their role is to monitor and supervise the trial, to ensure it is conducted to
high standards in accordance with the protocol, the principles of GCP, and with regard to patient safety.

The Trial Manager will ensure that the study is conducted in accordance with GCP through a combination of central monitoring and site monitoring visits.

**Central monitoring**
- All documentation essential for study initiation will be reviewed prior to site authorisation.

**Site monitoring**
- Consent forms will be reviewed as part of the study file and the presence of a copy in medical records confirmed.
- Consent forms will be compared against the study participant identification list.
- Inclusion/exclusion criteria will be reviewed for 20% of participants.
- Serious adverse events will be verified against medical records.
- The presence of essential documents in the study file will be checked.
- Management of the IMP will be reviewed periodically.

All monitoring findings will be reported and followed up with the appropriate persons in a timely manner. A final site visit will be performed at the end of the study:
- to complete final monitoring requirements, as above
- to review archiving of study site documentation.

18 Pharmacovigilance

18.1 Definitions

An ‘adverse event’ (AE) is any untoward medical occurrence which does not necessarily have a causal relationship with the treatment.

A ‘serious adverse event’ (SAE) is any untoward medical occurrence or effect that at any dose:
- results in death
- is life-threatening
- requires hospitalisation or prolongation of existing inpatients’ hospitalisation
- results in persistent or significant disability or incapacity.

‘Life-threatening’ in the definition of a serious adverse event or serious adverse reaction refers to an event in which the subject was at risk of death at the time of the event; it does not refer to an event which hypothetically might have caused death if it were more severe.

Medical judgement should be exercised in deciding whether an adverse event or reaction is serious in other situations. Important adverse events or reactions that are not immediately life-threatening or do not result in death or hospitalisation but may jeopardise the subject or may require intervention to prevent one of the other outcomes listed in the definition above, should also be considered serious.

An ‘adverse reaction’ is an untoward or unintended response to an investigational medicinal product (IMP) related to any dose administered.

A ‘suspected unexpected serious adverse reaction’ (SUSAR) is a severe adverse reaction, the nature of which is not consistent with the applicable product information.

18.2 Expected adverse reactions

18.2.1 Expected side effects of the termination procedure

Some degree of abdominal pain and vaginal bleeding is expected during and after a medical or surgical termination of pregnancy. Major complications are uterine perforation, pelvic sepsis and haemorrhage (requiring blood transfusion).

18.2.2 Expected adverse reactions to misoprostol

Misoprostol may cause diarrhoea, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, headache, dizziness and, more rarely, chills and fever. Uterine bleeding, sometimes heavy and prolonged, may occur. Very frequent uterine contractions are observed in the hours following prostaglandin intake.

18.2.3 Expected adverse reactions to mifepristone

Refer to Appendix A, Summary of Product Characteristics.

18.3 Protocol specifications

For the purposes of this protocol all non-serious adverse drug reactions and serious adverse events will be recorded.
The incidence of nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, dizziness, abdominal pain and bleeding will be recorded following explicit questioning; all other adverse drug reactions will be recorded as AEs.

The following are expected serious adverse events which are being explicitly recorded during the study: emergency admissions for incomplete abortion, missed abortion, or ongoing pregnancy (all of which require surgical evacuation) and pelvic infection without retained products of conception. These events will not be considered SAEs for reporting purposes, as described below.

18.4 Reporting serious adverse events
All SAEs, as specified by the protocol above, shall be reported to the Newcastle CTU immediately by fax or email.

The initial report must contain the following minimum information:

1. study identifier
2. subject’s unique study number
3. age
4. event description
5. start date of event
6. reason for seriousness, i.e. death, life-threatening, hospitalisation, disability/incapacity or other
7. date of termination procedure
8. causality to procedure (medical or surgical) or mifepristone or misoprostol
9. reporter’s name and date.

The follow-up report must contain all of the above, plus:

1. gender
2. stop date of event
3. mifepristone and misoprostol (dose, route, duration dates)
4. concomitant medication (name, dose, route, duration dates, indication)
5. outcome, including diagnosis
6. reporter’s name and date.

The CTU must report all SAEs which are also unexpected adverse drug reactions to the regulatory authority and ethics committee concerned within 15 days (7 days if life-threatening or resulting in death). Therefore it is very important that the initial report is faxed or emailed to the CTU within 24 hours of discovery.

19 Ethical considerations
Prior to commencement of the trial, a Clinical Trial Authorisation will be obtained from the MHRA and favourable opinions will be sought from the Research Ethics Committee and Trust R&D.

Information sheets will be provided to all eligible subjects and written informed consent obtained prior to any study procedures.

Non-English-speaking subjects will be included where possible: as part of the NHS service interpreters are provided at the initial consultation; and translation of the information sheet will be provided in six additional languages (choice of languages based on demand for translation services at the RVI).

20 Finance and insurance
The NHS Trust has liability for clinical negligence that harms individuals toward whom they have a duty of care. NHS Indemnity covers NHS staff and medical academic staff with honorary contracts conducting the trial.

The NIHR Health Technology Assessment programme is funding this study. The Newcastle Primary Care Trust are providing additional funds to support the community clinics used for follow-up visits.

21 Study reporting
Results of the study will be reported to the HTA, and be available on their web site. Participants may have access to the results on request.

All data collected during the study, and any intellectual property arising from the use of those data, shall be owned by the University of Newcastle.
22 References


41. EQ-5D. Available from http://euroqol.org/


23 Appendices

A Mifepristone, summary of product characteristics

B Willingness to pay

C Satisfaction with care

D Experience of care

E Impact of Event Scale

F Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale

G Quality of Life Questionnaire
Appendix A: Mifepristone, summary of product characteristics

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Document last updated on the eMC: Tue 04 December 2001

Mifegyne

1. NAME OF THE MEDICINAL PRODUCT
Mifegyne

2. QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE COMPOSITION
Each tablet contains: Active Ingredient – Mifepristone 200mg

3. PHARMACEUTICAL FORM
Light yellow, cylindrical, bi-convex tablets

4. CLINICAL PARTICULARS

4.1 Therapeutic indications
(1) Medical termination of intra uterine pregnancy of up to 63 days gestation.
(2) Softening and dilatation of the cervix uteri prior to mechanical cervical dilatation for pregnancy termination.
(3) For use in combination with gemeprost for termination of pregnancy between 13 and 24 weeks gestation.
(4) Labour induction in fetal death in utero
For termination of pregnancy mifepristone may only be administered in accordance with the Abortion Act 1967 as amended by The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990.
Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990.
As a consequence, when used for termination of pregnancy, mifepristone and any treatment necessary to effect complete termination of the pregnancy can only be prescribed by a medical doctor and administered in a NHS or non NHS hospital or centre (having approval to undertake termination of pregnancy). The product will be administered under the supervision of a medical practitioner.

4.2 Posology and method of administration

(1) Therapeutic termination of pregnancy of up to 63 days gestation.
600mg of mifepristone (3x200mg tablets) by mouth in a single dose. The dosage is independent of body weight.
Unless abortion has already been completed, gemeprost 1.0mg p.v should be given 36 – 48 hour later in the treatment centre.

(2) Softening and dilatation of the cervix
600mg mifepristone by mouth 36-48 hours prior to the planned operative procedure.

(3) For use in combination with gemeprost for termination of pregnancy between 13 – 24 weeks gestation
600mg mifepristone (3x200mg tablets) is taken by mouth 36-48 prior to scheduled prostaglandin termination of pregnancy
The patient must return to the treatment centre 36-48 hours later, the recommended procedure for therapeutic termination of pregnancy with gemeprost must then be followed. See gemeprost SPC

(4) Labour induction for fetal death in utero
600 mg of mifepristone (200mg x 3 tablets) in a single oral daily dose for two consecutive days.
Labour should be induced by the usual methods if it has not started within 72 hours following the first administration of mifepristone.
If the patient vomits shortly after administration of the mifepristone she should inform the doctor.

4.3 Contraindications

- Suspected ectopic pregnancy
- Pregnancy not confirmed by ultrasound scan or biological tests
- Chronic adrenal failure
- Severe Asthma not controlled by therapy
Known allergy to mifepristone or any component of the product
Inherited porphyria
If gemeprost is used, any contraindication to gemeprost (see gemeprost product information).

4.4 Special warnings and special precautions for use

WARNINGS
In the absence of specific studies, mifepristone is not recommended in patients with:
Renal failure, hepatic failure or malnutrition.
Patients with prosthetic heart valves or who have had one previous episode of infective endocarditis should receive chemoprophylaxis according to the current UK recommendations.

1) Medical termination of pregnancy of up to 63 days gestation
The method requires active involvement of the woman who should be informed of the requirements of the methods:
- the necessity to combine treatment with prostaglandin to be administered at a second visit.
- The need for a follow up visit within 10 to 14 days after intake of mifepristone to check that abortion is complete.
- The possibility of failure of the method which may require termination by another method.
In the case of a pregnancy occurring with an intra-uterine device in situ, this device must be removed before administration of mifepristone.
The expulsion may take place before prostaglandin administration (in about 3% of cases). This does not preclude the follow up visit to check that the abortion is complete.

-Risks related to the method
- Failures
The non-negligible risk of failure, makes the follow up visit mandatory to check that abortion is complete.
- Bleeding
The patient must be informed of the occurrence of prolonged vaginal bleeding (up to 12 days after intake of mifepristone) which may be heavy. Bleeding occurs in almost all cases and it not in any way proof of complete expulsion.
The patient should receive precise instructions on whom she should contact and where to go in the event of any problems, particularly in the case of very heavy vaginal bleeding.
A follow-up visit must take place within a period of 10 to 14 days after
administration of mifepristone to verify by the appropriate means (clinical examination, ultrasound scan, and Beta-HCG measurement) that expulsion has been completed and that vaginal bleeding has stopped or substantially reduced. In case of persistent bleeding beyond the control visit, its disappearance should be checked within a few days.

If continuing pregnancy is suspected, a further ultrasound scan may be required to evaluate its viability.

Persistence of vaginal bleeding at this point could signify incomplete abortion, or an unnoticed extra-uterine pregnancy, and appropriate treatment should be considered.

In the event of continuing pregnancy diagnosed after the control visit, termination by another method will be proposed to the woman.

Since heavy bleeding requiring hemostatic curettage occurs in 0 to 1.4% of the cases during the medical method of pregnancy termination, special care should be given to patients with hemostatic disorders with hypocoagulability, or with anemia.

The decision to use the medical or the surgical method should be decided with specialised consultants according to the type of hemostatic disorder and the level of anaemia.

2 ) Softening and dilatation of the cervix uteri prior to surgical pregnancy termination

For the full efficacy of therapy, the use of Mifepristone must be followed 36 to 48 hours later and not beyond, by surgical termination.

-Risks related to the method
- Bleeding

The woman will be informed of the risk of vaginal bleeding which may be heavy, following intake of mifepristone. She should be informed of the risk of abortion prior to surgery (although minimal): she will be informed on where to go in order to check for the completeness of expulsion, or in any case of emergency.

Other risks
They are those of the surgical procedure.

3 ) For use with gemeprost for termination of pregnancy between 13 – 24 weeks.

For the full efficacy of therapy, Mifepristone must be followed, 36 to 48 hours later by initiation of gemeprost.

-Risks related to the method
- Bleeding

The woman will be informed of the risk of vaginal bleeding following intake of mifepristone. She should be informed of the risk of abortion prior to administration of gemeprost (although minimal): she will be informed on where to go in case of
emergency.

**Other risks**

They are those of gemeprost administration.

A follow-up visit is recommended at an appropriate interval after delivery of the fetus to verify that vaginal bleeding has stopped or has substantially reduced. Persistence of vaginal bleeding could signify incomplete abortion and appropriate investigation/treatment should be considered.

4) In all instances

The use of mifepristone requires rhesus determination and hence the prevention of rhesus allo-immunisation as well as other general measures taken usually during any termination of pregnancy.

During clinical trials, pregnancies occurred between embryo expulsion and the resumption of menses.

To avoid potential exposure of a subsequent pregnancy to mifepristone, it is recommended that conception be avoided during the next menstrual cycle. Reliable contraceptive precautions should therefore commence as early as possible after mifepristone administration.

**PRECAUTIONS**

1) In all instances

In case of suspected acute adrenal failure, dexamethasone administration is recommended. 1 mg of dexamethasone antagonises a dose of 400 mg of mifepristone.

Due to the antiglucocorticoid activity of mifepristone, the efficacy of long-term corticosteroid therapy, including inhaled corticosteroids in asthmatic patients, may be decreased during the 3 to 4 days following intake of mifepristone. Therapy should be adjusted.

A decrease of the efficacy of the method can theoretically occur due to the antiprostaglandin properties of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) including aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid). Use non-NSAI analgesics.

2) Medical termination of intra-uterine pregnancy with mifepristone and gemeprost

Rare serious cardiovascular accidents have been reported following the intra muscular administration of the prostaglandin analogue sulprostone (withdrawn in 1992). No such cases have been reported since analogues of PGE₁ (gemeprost or misoprostol) have been used. For these reasons and as a special precautionary measure, the medical method is not recommended for use in women over 35 years of age and who smoke more than 10 cigarettes a day.

**Method of prostaglandin administration**

During administration and for a minimum of three hours following administration and in accordance with clinical judgement, the patients should be monitored in the
treatment centre, which must be equipped with the appropriate equipment.

3. For the sequential use of mifepristone - prostaglandin, whatever the indication
The precautions related to the prostaglandin used should be followed where relevant.
The treatment procedure should be fully explained and completely understood by the patient. There is a Patient Information Leaflet available for each of the indications in the tablet carton. Prior to administration of mifepristone the appropriate leaflet should be given to the patient to read.

4.5 Interaction with other medicinal products and other forms of Interaction
In view of the single dose administration, no specific interactions have been studied. However, there could be interactions with drugs which modulate or inhibit prostaglandin synthesis and metabolism. See PRECAUTIONS above.

4.6 Pregnancy and lactation
In animals (see section 5.3 Pre-clinical safety data), the abortifacient effect of mifepristone precludes the proper assessment of any teratogenic effect of the molecule.
Mifepristone is a lipophilic compound and may theoretically be excreted in the mother's breast milk. However, no data is available. Consequently, mifepristone use should be avoided during breast-feeding.

4.7 Effects on ability to drive and use machines

None known.

4.8 Undesirable effects

**Most frequently reported undesirable effects (mifepristone)**
- Urogenital
  - Bleeding
  Heavy bleeding occurs in about 5% of the cases and may require hemostatic curettage in up to 0.7% of cases.
  - Very common uterine contractions or cramping (10 to 45%) in the hours following prostaglandin intake.
  - During induction of second trimester termination of uterine rupture has been uncommonly reported after prostaglandin intake. The reports occurred particularly in multiparous women or in women with a caesarean section scar.
- Gastrointestinal
  - Cramping, light or moderate.
  - Nausea, vomiting.

**Other undesirable effects (mifepristone)**
- Hypersensitivity and skin
  - Hypersensitivity: skin rashes uncommon (0.2%), single cases of urticaria.
  - Single cases of erythroderma, erythema nodosum, epidermal necrolysis have also been reported.
- **Other systems**
  - Rare cases of headaches, malaise, vagal symptoms (hot flushes, dizziness, chills have been reported) and fever.

**Undesirable effects (gemeprost)**
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea, and rarely hypotension (0.25%)

4.9 Overdose

Tolerance studies have shown that administration of doses of mifepristone of up to
requires treatment in a specialist environment.

5. PHARMACOLOGICAL PROPERTIES

5.1 Pharmacodynamic properties

Mifepristone is a synthetic steroid with an antiprogestational action as a result of competition with progesterone at the progesterone receptors. At doses ranging from 3 to 10mg/kg orally, it inhibits the action of endogenous or exogenous progesterone in different animal species (rat, mouse, rabbit and monkey). This action is manifested in the form of pregnancy termination in rodents. In women at doses of greater than or equal to 1mg/kg, mifepristone antagonises the endometrial and myometrial effects of progesterone. During pregnancy it sensitises the myometrium to the contraction inducing action of prostaglandins. Mifepristone induces softening and dilatation of the cervix, softening and dilatation has been shown to be detectable from 24 hours after administration of mifepristone and increases to a maximum at approximately 36 – 48 hours after administration. In the majority of cases, abortion will occur within 4 hours of administration of gemeprost.

During the termination of pregnancy between 13 and 20 weeks gestation, mifepristone administered at a 600-mg dose, 36 to 48 hours prior to the first administration of prostaglandins, reduces the induction-abortion interval, and also decreases the dose of gemeprost required for the expulsion. Mifepristone binds to the glucocorticoid receptor. In animals at doses of 10 to 25 mg/kg it inhibits the action of dexamethasone. In man the antiglucocorticoid action is manifested at a dose equal to or greater than 4.5 mg/kg by a compensatory elevation of ACTH and cortisol. Mifepristone has a weak anti-androgenic action which only appears in animals during prolonged administration of very high doses.

5.2 Pharmacokinetic properties

After oral administration of a single dose of 600 mg mifepristone is rapidly absorbed. The peak concentration of 1.98 mg/l is reached after 1.30 hours (means of 10 subjects).

There is a non-linear dose response. After a distribution phase, elimination is at first slow, the concentration decreasing by a half between about 12 and 72 hours, and then more rapid, giving an elimination half-life of 18 hours. With radio receptor
assay techniques, the terminal half-life is of up to 90 hours, including all metabolites of mifepristone able to bind to progesterone receptors. After administration of low doses of mifepristone (20 mg orally or intravenously), the absolute bioavailability is 69%.

In plasma mifepristone is 98% bound to plasma proteins: albumin and principally alpha-1-acid glycoprotein (AAG), to which binding is saturable. Due to this specific binding, volume of distribution and plasma clearance of mifepristone are inversely proportional to the plasma concentration of AAG.

N-Demethylation and terminal hydroxylation of the 17-propynyl chain are primary metabolic pathways of hepatic oxidative metabolism. Mifepristone is mainly excreted in faeces. After administration of a 600 mg labelled dose, 10% of the total radioactivity is eliminated in the urine and 90% in the faeces.

6. PHARMACEUTICAL PARTICULARS

6.1 List of excipients

Anhydrous colloidal silica 3mg, Maize Starch 102mg, Povidone 12mg, Microcrystalline cellulose 30mg, Magnesium Stearate 3mg.

6.2 Incompatibilities

None known.

6.3 Shelf life

Tablets - 36 months.

6.4 Special precautions for storage

None.

6.5 Nature and contents of container

Blister pack (PVC and Aluminum foil and carton) containing 3 tablets.

6.6 Instructions for use and handling
The treatment procedure should be fully explained and completely understood by the patient.

**Administrative Data**

**7. MARKETING AUTHORISATION HOLDER**

Exelgyn S.A., 6 rue Christophe Colomb, 75008 Paris, France

**8. MARKETING AUTHORISATION NUMBER(S)**

Mifegyne Tablets 16152/0001

**9. DATE OF FIRST AUTHORISATION/RENEWAL OF THE AUTHORISATION**

Renewal May 1999

**10. DATE OF REVISION OF THE TEXT**

August 2001
Appendix B: Willingness to pay

Methods and questions

Women will be asked to state their WTP for their preferred method of termination at the following points.

1. Pre TOP: for women expressing a preference and enrolled in the ‘preference arm’ we will ascertain the maximum amount WTP using the payment card method.
2. Post TOP: all women who underwent TOP will be asked which method they would choose if undergoing a future TOP and if they would be willing to pay an amount to receive that preferred option at a future date. If they answer yes to this, we will ascertain the maximum amount WTP using the payment card method.

Questioning strategy (outline)
1. Description of termination method.
2. Choice of termination method.
3. Willing to pay?
   i. If no: asked why not
   ii. If yes: payment card method used (see below).
4. Then asked to explain the amount indicated. NB There is a need to categorise protest zeros from non-demanders.

Payment card method

The concept of willingness to pay and the payment card method have been used previously in a study of women’s preferences in the termination of pregnancy.3

In this study, once respondents have indicated if they have a preference for a particular method of termination and that they would be willing to pay to access that method, they will be handed a card containing a list of values from £0 to £1000 and £1000+.

£0 £5 £10 £20 £30 £40 £50 £60 £70 £80 £90 £100 £110 £120 £140 £160 £180 £200 £225 £250 £275 £300 £350 £400 £450 £500 £600 £700 £800 £900 £1000 £1000+

If £1000+, can you say what is the exact amount?

Respondents will be asked to put a cross by the amounts that they would definitely not pay and then to consider what would be the maximum amount they would be willing to pay by circling the relevant value. If respondents indicate ‘£1000+’ they will be asked to write in the amount. All respondents will be asked an open-ended question regarding why they chose the amount indicated.

Other data to be collected

Income, age, age at which left education, occupation, previous operation with a general anaesthetic (yes/no).

Appendix C: Satisfaction with care

The E5 satisfaction measure assesses satisfaction with:

1. procedure overall
2. technical quality (thoroughness, carefulness, competence)
3. interpersonal manner (courtesy, respect, sensitivity, friendliness) of the staff
4. length of wait from request to procedure
5. using a five-choice evaluation scale:
### Appendix D: Experience of care

Semantic differential rating for acceptability of procedure

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Appendix E: Impact of Event Scale
Below is a list of comments made by people after stressful life events. Using the following scale, please indicate (with a ✓) how frequently each of these comments were true for you during the past seven days.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I thought about it when I didn’t mean to</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I avoided letting myself get upset when I thought about it or was reminded of it</td>
<td>•</td>
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<tr>
<td>I tried to remove it from memory</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
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<tr>
<td>I had trouble falling asleep or staying asleep because of pictures or thoughts about it that came into my mind</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
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<tr>
<td>I had waves of strong feelings about it</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
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<tr>
<td>I had dreams about it</td>
<td>•</td>
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<tr>
<td>I stayed away from reminders of it</td>
<td>•</td>
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<tr>
<td>I felt as if it hadn’t happened or wasn’t real</td>
<td>•</td>
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<tr>
<td>I tried not to talk about it</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pictures about it popped into my mind</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other things kept making me think about it</td>
<td>•</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was aware that I still had a lot of feelings about it, but I didn’t deal with them</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tried not to think about it</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any reminder brought back feelings about it</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My feelings about it were kind of numb</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Scoring: not at all, 0; rarely, 1; sometimes, 3; often, 5. Total = total the scores.
Appendix F: Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale

The statements below are about how you are feeling in yourself.

Please read each statement and circle the number next to the answer which comes closest to how you have been feeling in the past week. (Please make sure you answer every statement).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Option 1</th>
<th>Option 2</th>
<th>Option 3</th>
<th>Option 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) I feel tense or 'wound up':</td>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>A lot of the time</td>
<td>From time to time, occasionally</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) I still enjoy the things I used to enjoy:</td>
<td>Definitely as much</td>
<td>Not quite so much</td>
<td>Only a little</td>
<td>Hardly at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) I get a sort of frightened feeling as if something awful is going to happen:</td>
<td>Very definitely and quite badly</td>
<td>Yes, but not too badly</td>
<td>A little, but it doesn't worry me</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) I can laugh and see the funny side of things:</td>
<td>As much as I always could</td>
<td>Not quite so much now</td>
<td>Definitely not so much now</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Worrying thoughts go through my mind:</td>
<td>A great deal of the time</td>
<td>A lot of the time</td>
<td>From time to time, but not too often</td>
<td>Only occasionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) I feel cheerful:</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Not often</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>g) I feel as if I am slowed down:</td>
<td>Nearly all the time</td>
<td>Very often</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h) I get a sort of frightened feeling like butterflies in the stomach:</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>Quite often</td>
<td>Very often</td>
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<tr>
<td>i) I have lost interest in my appearance:</td>
<td>Definitely</td>
<td>I don't take as much care as I should</td>
<td>I take just as much care</td>
<td>I take more care than I have previously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j) I feel restless, as if I have to be on the move:</td>
<td>Very much indeed</td>
<td>Quite a lot</td>
<td>Not very much</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k) I look forward with enjoyment to things:</td>
<td>As much as I ever did</td>
<td>Rather less than I used to</td>
<td>Hardly at all</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l) I get sudden feelings of panic:</td>
<td>Very often indeed</td>
<td>Quite often</td>
<td>Not very often</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>g) I can sit at ease and feel relaxed:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definitely: ........................................... 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually: ............................................ 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not often: .......................................... 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all: ......................................... 4</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>n) I can enjoy a good book or radio or TV programme:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Often: .................................................. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes: ........................................... 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not often: ........................................... 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very seldom: ......................................... 4</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Appendix G: Quality of Life Questionnaire (EQ-5D)

EQ-5D – This is Euro Qual – 5D for completion by the patient. This is a standard questionnaire which is used in large research studies in similar populations.

The next few questions are how you are at present. For each of the five sets of statements below please circle the number that best describes your own health state today.

1. **Mobility**
   - I have no problems in walking about .......................................................... 1
   - I have some problems in walking about ...................................................... 2
   - I am confined to bed .................................................................................. 3

2. **Self-Care**
   - I have no problems with self-care .............................................................. 1
   - I have some problems washing or dressing myself ...................................... 2
   - I am unable to wash or dress myself ........................................................... 3

3. **Usual Activities**
   - I have no problems with performing my usual activities
     (eg work, study, housework, family or leisure activities) .......................... 1
   - I have some problems with performing my usual activities ...................... 2
   - I am unable to perform my usual activities ............................................. 3

4. **Pain/Discomfort**
   - I have no pain or discomfort .................................................................... 1
   - I have moderate pain or discomfort ......................................................... 2
   - I have extreme pain or discomfort ............................................................ 3

5. **Anxiety/Depression**
   - I am not anxious or depressed ................................................................. 1
   - I am moderately anxious or depressed .................................................... 2
   - I am extremely anxious or depressed ...................................................... 3

EQ-5D cont.d
6. Now we would like you to tell us how good or bad is your own health today, in your opinion.

To help you say how good or bad your own health state is, we have drawn a scale (rather like a thermometer) on which the best state you can imagine is marked by 100 and the worst state you can imagine is marked by 0.

Please draw a line from the box below to whichever point on the scale indicates how good or bad you feel your health state is today.
### Appendix 3

**Individual-level unit costs and resource usage for each method of TOP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource category</th>
<th>Unit cost (£)</th>
<th>MTOP (n=960) Number</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>STOP (n=811) Number</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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<td>0.03</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
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<td>ERPC</td>
<td>483.79</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gemeprost</td>
<td>43.00</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misoprostol</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>642</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syntocinon</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metronidazole</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doxycycline</td>
<td>3.72</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cephalexin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cocodamol</td>
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<td>0.43</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0.04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Codeine</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>92</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paracetamol</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pethidine</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trazodone</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyclizine</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Metoclopramide</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Odansetron IV</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
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ERPC, evacuation of retained products of conception.
Appendix 4

Individual-level unit costs and resource usage for each arm of the trial

**TABLE 49 Randomised arm**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource category</th>
<th>Unit cost (£)</th>
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<th>STOP (n = 154)</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Number</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>484.94</td>
<td>4 0.03</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gemeprost</td>
<td>43.00</td>
<td>2 0.02</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.17</td>
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<td>9 0.07</td>
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<td>0 0.00</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doxycycline</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cephalexin</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Diclofenac</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0 0.00</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Trazodone</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0 0.00</td>
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<td>0.06</td>
<td>0 0.00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3.14</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odansetron IV</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.54</td>
<td>24 0.16</td>
<td>2 0.01</td>
</tr>
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</table>

ERPC, evacuation of retained products of conception.
TABLE 50 Preference arm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource category</th>
<th>Unit cost (£)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>484.94</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gemeprost</td>
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<td>0.03</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>539</td>
<td>0.92</td>
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<td>0.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syntocinon</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Implantable contraceptives (subdermal implants and hormonally impregnated intrauterine systems) versus other forms of reversible contraceptives: two systematic reviews to assess relative effectiveness, acceptability, tolerability and cost-effectiveness.

No. 8
An introduction to statistical methods for health technology assessment.
A review by White SJ, Ashby D, Brown PJ.

No. 9
Disease-modifying drugs for multiple sclerosis: a rapid and systematic review.
By Clegg A, Bryant J, Milne R.

No. 10
Publication and related biases.
A review by Song F, Eastwood AJ, Gilbody S, Dudley L, Sutton AJ.

No. 11
Cost and outcome implications of the organisation of vascular services.
By Michaels J, Brazier E, Palfreyman S, Shackley P, Slack R.

No. 12
Monitoring blood glucose control in diabetes mellitus: a systematic review.
By Coster S, Gulliford MC, Seed PT, Powrie JK, Swaminathan R.

No. 13
The effectiveness of domiciliary health visiting: a systematic review of international studies and a selective review of the British literature.

No. 14
The determinants of screening uptake and interventions for increasing uptake: a systematic review.

No. 15
The effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of prophylactic removal of wisdom teeth.
A rapid review by Song F, O'Meara S, Wilson P, Goldser S, Kleijnen J.

No. 16

No. 17
A rapid and systematic review of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of the taxanes used in the treatment of advanced breast and ovarian cancer.
By Lister-Sharp D, McDonagh MS, Khan KS, Kleijnen J.

No. 18
Liquid-based cytology in cervical screening: a rapid and systematic review.
By Payne N, Chilcott J, McGoogan E.

No. 19
Randomised controlled trial of non-directive counselling, cognitive-behaviour therapy and usual general practitioner care in the management of depression as well as mixed anxiety and depression in primary care.

No. 20
Routine referral for radiography of patients presenting with low back pain: is patients' outcome influenced by GP referral for plain radiography?
By Kerry S, Hilton S, Patel S, Dunlase D, Rink E, Lord J.

No. 21
Systematic reviews of wound care management: (3) antimicrobial agents for chronic wounds; (4) diabetic foot ulceration.
By O'Meara S, Callum N, Majid M, Sheldon T.

No. 22
Using routine data to complement and enhance the results of randomised controlled trials.
By Llewsey JD, Leyland AH, Murray GD, Boddy FA.

No. 23
Coronary artery stents in the treatment of ischaemic heart disease: a rapid and systematic review.
By Meads C, Cummins C, Jolly K, Stevens A, Burls A, Hyde C.

No. 24
Outcome measures for adult critical care: a systematic review.
By Hayes JA, Black NA, Jenkinson C, Young JD, Rowan KM, Daly K, et al.

No. 25
A systematic review to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions to promote the initiation of breastfeeding.
By Fairbank L, O'Meara S, Renfrew MJ, Woolridge M, Sowden AJ, Lister-Sharp D.

No. 26
Implantable cardioverter defibrillators: arrhythmias. A rapid and systematic review.
By Parkes J, Bryant J, Milne R.

No. 27
Treatments for fatigue in multiple sclerosis: a rapid and systematic review.
By Brañas P, Jordan R, Fry-Smith A, Burls A, Hyde C.

No. 28
Early asthma prophylaxis, natural history, skeletal development and economy (EASE): a pilot randomised controlled trial.

No. 29
Screening for hypercholesterolaemia versus case finding for familial hypercholesterolaemia: a systematic review and cost-effectiveness analysis.
By Marks D, Wonderling D, Thorogood M, Lambeth H, Humphries SE, Neil HAW.

No. 30
A rapid and systematic review of the clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of glycoprotein IIb/IIIa antagonists in the medical management of unstable angina.
By McDonagh MS, Bachmann LM, Golder S, Kleijnen J, ter Riet G.
A randomised controlled trial of prehospital intravenous fluid replacement therapy in serious trauma.

By Turner J, Nicholl J, Webber L, Cox H, Dixon S, Yates D.

No. 32
Intrathecal pumps for giving opioids in chronic pain: a systematic review.

By Williams JE, Loug G, Towleron G.

No. 33
Combination therapy (interferon alfa and ribavirin) in the treatment of chronic hepatitis C: a rapid and systematic review.

By Shepherd J, Waugh N, Hewston P.

No. 34
A systematic review of comparisons of effect sizes derived from randomised and non-randomised studies.

By MacLethose RR, Reeves BC, Harvey IM, Sheldon TA, Russell IT, Black AMS.

No. 35
Intravascular ultrasound-guided interventions in coronary artery disease: a systematic literature review, with decision-analytic modelling, of outcomes and cost-effectiveness.

By Berry E, Kelly S, Hutton J, Lindsay HSJ, Blaxill JM, Evans JA, et al.

No. 36
A randomised controlled trial to evaluate the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of counselling patients with chronic depression.

By Simpson S, Corney R, Fitzgerald P, Beecham J.

No. 37
Systematic review of treatments for atopic eczema.

By Hoare C, Li Wan Po A, Williams H.

No. 38
Bayesian methods in health technology assessment: a review.

By Spiegelhalter DJ, Myles JP, Jones DR, Abrams KR.

No. 39
The management of dyspepsia: a systematic review.


No. 40
A systematic review of treatments for severe psoriasis.

By Griffiths CEM, Clark CM, Chalmers RJC, Li Wan Po A, Williams HC.

Volume 5, 2001

No. 1
Clinical and cost-effectiveness of donepezil, rivastigmine and galantamine for Alzheimer’s disease: a rapid and systematic review.


No. 2
The clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of riluzole for motor neurone disease: a rapid and systematic review.


No. 3
Equity and the economic evaluation of healthcare.

By Sassi F, Archard L, Le Grand J.

No. 4
Quality-of-life measures in chronic diseases of childhood.

By Eiser C, Morse R.

No. 5
Eliciting public preferences for healthcare: a systematic review of techniques.


No. 6
General health status measures for people with cognitive impairment: learning disability and acquired brain injury.

By Riemsma RP, Forbes CA, Glanville JM, Eastwood AJ, Kleijnen J.

No. 7
An assessment of screening strategies for fragile X syndrome in the UK.

By Pembrey ME, Barnicoat AJ, Carmichael B, Bobrow M, Turner G.

No. 8
Issues in methodological research: perspectives from researchers and commissioners.


No. 9
Systematic reviews of wound care management: (5) beds; (6) compression; (7) laser therapy, therapeutic ultrasound, electrotherapy and electromagnetic therapy.

By Cullum N, Nelson EA, Fleming K, Sheldon T.

No. 10
Effects of educational and psychosocial interventions for adolescents with diabetes mellitus: a systematic review.

By Hampson SE, Skinner TC, Hart J, Storey L, Gage H, Foxcroft D, et al.

No. 11
Effectiveness of autologous chondrocyte transplantation for hyaline cartilage defects in knees: a rapid and systematic review.

By Johanputra P, Parry D, Fry-Smith A, Burd A.

No. 12
Statistical assessment of the learning curves of health technologies.

By Ramsay CR, Grant AM, Wallace SA, Garthwaite PH, Monk AF, Russell IT.

No. 13
The effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of temozolomide for the treatment of recurrent malignant glioma: a rapid and systematic review.

By Dinnes J, Cave C, Huang S, Major K, Milne R.

No. 14
A rapid and systematic review of the clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of debriding agents in treating surgical wounds healing by secondary intention.

By Lewis R, Whiting P, ter Riet G, O’Meara S, Glanville J.

No. 15
Home treatment for mental health problems: a systematic review.


No. 16
How to develop cost-conscious guidelines.

By Eccles M, Mason J.

No. 17
The role of specialist nurses in multiple sclerosis: a rapid and systematic review.

By De Broe S, Christopher F, Waugh N.

No. 18
A rapid and systematic review of the clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of orlistat in the management of obesity.

By O’Meara S, Riemsma R, Shirran L, Mather L, ter Riet G.

No. 19
The clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of pioglitazone for type 2 diabetes mellitus: a rapid and systematic review.

By Chilcott J, Wight J, Lloyd Jones M, Tappenden P.

No. 20
Extended scope of nursing practice: a multicentre randomised controlled trial of appropriately trained nurses and preregistration house officers in preoperative assessment in elective general surgery.

No. 21  Systematic reviews of the effectiveness of day care for people with severe mental disorders: (1) Acute day hospital versus admission; (2) Vocational rehabilitation; (3) Day hospital versus outpatient care.

No. 22  The measurement and monitoring of surgical adverse events.
By Bruce J, Russell EM, Mollison J, Krukowski ZH.

No. 23  Action research: a systematic review and guidance for assessment.
By Waterman H, Tillen D, Dickson R, de Koning H.

No. 24  A rapid and systematic review of the clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of gemcitabine for the treatment of pancreatic cancer.

No. 25  A rapid and systematic review of the evidence for the clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of irinotecan, oxaliplatin and raltitrexed for the treatment of advanced colorectal cancer.
By Lloyd Jones M, Hummel S, Bansback N, Orr B, Seymour M.

No. 26  Comparison of the effectiveness of inhaler devices in asthma and chronic obstructive airways disease: a systematic review of the literature.

No. 27  The cost-effectiveness of magnetic resonance imaging for investigation of the knee joint.

No. 28  A rapid and systematic review of the clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of topotecan for ovarian cancer.
By Forbes C, Shirran L, Bagnall A-M, Duffy S, ter Riet G.

No. 29  Superseded by a report published in a later volume.

No. 30  The role of radiography in primary care patients with low back pain of at least 6 weeks duration: a randomised (unblinded) controlled trial.
By Kendrick D, Fielding K, Bentley E, Miller P, Kerslake R, Pringle M.

No. 31  Design and use of questionnaires: a review of best practice applicable to surveys of health service staff and patients.

No. 32  A rapid and systematic review of the clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of paclitaxel, docetaxel, gemcitabine and vinorelbine in non-small-cell lung cancer.
By Clegg A, Scott DA, Sidhu M, Hewitson P, Waugh N.

No. 33  Subgroup analyses in randomised controlled trials: quantifying the risks of false-positives and false-negatives.
By Brooks ST, Whitley E, Peters TJ, Mulheran PA, Egger M, Davey Smith G.

No. 34  Depot antipsychotic medication in the treatment of patients with schizophrenia: (1) Meta-review; (2) Patient and nurse attitudes.
By David AS, Adams C.

No. 35  A systematic review of controlled trials of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of brief psychological treatments for depression.

No. 36  Cost analysis of child health surveillance.
By Sanderson D, Wright D, Acton C, Duree D.

Volume 6, 2002

No. 1  A study of the methods used to select review criteria for clinical audit.
By Hearnshaw H, Harker R, Cheater F, Baker R, Grimshaw G.

No. 2  Fludarabine as second-line therapy for B cell chronic lymphocytic leukaemia: a technology assessment.

No. 3  Rituximab as third-line treatment for refractory or recurrent Stage III or IV follicular non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma: a systematic review and economic evaluation.

No. 4  A systematic review of discharge arrangements for older people.

No. 5  The clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of inhaler devices used in the routine management of chronic asthma in older children: a systematic review and economic evaluation.
By Peters J, Stevenson M, Beverley C, Lim J, Smith S.

No. 6  The clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of sibutramine in the management of obesity: a technology assessment.
By O’Meara S, Riemsma R, Shirran L, Mather L, ter Riet G.

No. 7  The cost-effectiveness of magnetic resonance angiography for carotid artery stenosis and peripheral vascular disease: a systematic review.

No. 8  Promoting physical activity in South Asian Muslim women through ‘exercise on prescription’.
By Carroll B, Ali N, Azam N.

No. 9  Zanamivir for the treatment of influenza in adults: a systematic review and economic evaluation.

No. 10  A review of the natural history and epidemiology of multiple sclerosis: implications for resource allocation and health economic models.
By Richards RG, Sampson FC, Beard SM, Tappenden P.

No. 11  Screening for gestational diabetes: a systematic review and economic evaluation.
By Scott DA, Loveman E, McIntyre I, Waugh N.

No. 12  The clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of surgery for people with morbid obesity: a systematic review and economic evaluation.

No. 13  The clinical effectiveness of trastuzumab for breast cancer: a systematic review.

No. 14  The clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of vinorelbine for breast cancer: a systematic review and economic evaluation.
No. 15  A systematic review of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of metal-on-metal hip resurfacing arthroplasty for treatment of hip disease.
By Vale L, Wyness L, McCormack K, McKenzie L, Brazzelli M, Stearns SC.

No. 16  The clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of bupropion and nicotine replacement therapy for smoking cessation: a systematic review and economic evaluation.
By Woolacott NF, Jones L, Forbes CA, Mather LC, Sowden AJ, Song FJ, et al.

No. 17  A systematic review of effectiveness and economic evaluation of new drug treatments for juvenile idiopathic arthritis: etanercept.
By Cummins C, Connock M, Fry-Smith A, Burl A.

No. 18  Clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of growth hormone in children: a systematic review and economic evaluation.

By Bryant J, Loveman E, Chase D, Mihaylova B, Cave C, Gerard K, et al.

No. 20  Clinical medication review by a pharmacist of patients on repeat prescriptions in general practice: a randomised controlled trial.
By Zermansky AG, Petty DR, Raynor DK, Lowe CJ, Freemantle N, Vail A.

No. 21  The effectiveness of infliximab and etanercept for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis: a systematic review and economic evaluation.
By Jobanputra P, Barton P, Bryan S, Burl A.

No. 22  A systematic review and economic evaluation of computerised cognitive behaviour therapy for depression and anxiety.
By Kaltenhaezer E, Shackley P, Stevens K, Beverley C, Parry G, Chilcott J.

No. 23  A systematic review and economic evaluation of pegylated liposomal doxorubicin hydrochloride for ovarian cancer.
By Forbes C, Wilby J, Richardson G, Sculptor M, Mather L, Reimsmma R.

No. 24  A systematic review of the effectiveness of interventions based on a stages-of-change approach to promote individual behaviour change.

No. 25  A systematic review update of the clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of glycoprotein IIb/IIIa antagonists.

No. 26  A systematic review of the effectiveness, cost-effectiveness and barriers to implementation of thrombolytic and neuroprotective therapy for acute ischaemic stroke in the NHS.

No. 27  A randomised controlled crossover trial of nurse practitioner versus doctor-led outpatient care in a bronchiectasis clinic.

No. 28  Clinical effectiveness and cost–consequences of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors in the treatment of sex offenders.
By Adi Y, Ashcroft D, Browne K, Beech A, Fry-Smith A, Hyde C.

No. 29  Treatment of established osteoporosis: a systematic review and cost–utility analysis.
By Kanis JA, Brazier JE, Stevenson M, Calvert NW, Lloyd Jones M.

No. 30  Which anaesthetic agents are cost-effective in day surgery? Literature review, national survey of practice and randomised controlled trial.

No. 31  Screening for hepatitis C among injecting drug users and in genitourinary medicine clinics: systematic reviews of effectiveness, modelling study and national survey of current practice.

No. 32  The measurement of satisfaction with healthcare: implications for practice from a systematic review of the literature.

No. 33  The effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of imatinib in chronic myeloid leukaemia: a systematic review.
By Garside R, Round A, Dalziel K, Stein K, Royle R.

No. 34  A comparative study of hypertonic saline, daily and alternate-day rhDNase in children with cystic fibrosis.

No. 35  A systematic review of the costs and effectiveness of different models of paediatric home care.

Volume 7, 2003

No. 1  How important are comprehensive literature searches and the assessment of trial quality in systematic reviews? Empirical study.
By Egger M, Juni P, Bartlett C, Holsenste F, Sterne J.

No. 2  Systematic review of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness, and economic evaluation, of home versus hospital or satellite unit haemodialysis for people with end-stage renal failure.

No. 3  Systematic review and economic evaluation of the effectiveness of infliximab for the treatment of Crohn's disease.
By Clark W, Raftery J, Barton P, Song F, Fry-Smith A, Burl A.

No. 4  A review of the clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of routine anti-D prophylaxis for pregnant women who are rhesus negative.

No. 5  Systematic review and evaluation of the use of tumour markers in paediatric oncology: Ewing's sarcoma and neuroblastoma.

No. 6  The cost-effectiveness of screening for Helicobacter pylori to reduce mortality and morbidity from gastric cancer and peptic ulcer disease: a discrete-event simulation model.
No. 7  The clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of routine dental checks: a systematic review and economic evaluation.

No. 8  A multicentre randomised controlled trial assessing the costs and benefits of using structured information and analysis of women's preferences in the management of menorrhagia.

No. 9  Clinical effectiveness and cost-utility of photodynamic therapy for wet age-related macular degeneration: a systematic review and economic evaluation.
   By Meads C, Salas C, Roberts T, Moore D, Fry-Smith A, Hyde C.

No. 10 Evaluation of molecular tests for prenatal diagnosis of chromosome abnormalities.

No. 11 First and second trimester antenatal screening for Down's syndrome: the results of the Serum, Urine and Ultrasound Screening Study (SURUSS).
   By Wald NJ, Rodeck C, Hackshaw AK, Walters J, Chitty L, Mackinson AM.

No. 12 The effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of ultrasound locating devices for central venous access: a systematic review and economic evaluation.
   By Calvert N, Hind D, McWilliams RG, Thomas SM, Beverley C, Davidson A.

No. 13 A systematic review of atypical antipsychotics in schizophrenia.

No. 14 Prostate Testing for Cancer and Treatment (ProtecT) feasibility study.
   By Donovan J, Hamdy F, Neal D, Peters T, Oliver S, Brindle L, et al.

No. 15 Early thrombolysis for the treatment of acute myocardial infarction: a systematic review and economic evaluation.

No. 16 Screening for fragile X syndrome: a literature review and modelling.
   By Song FJ, Barton P, Sleightholme V, Yao GL, Fry-Smith A.

No. 17 Systematic review of endoscopic sinus surgery for nasal polyps.
   By Dalziel K, Stein K, Round A, Garside R, Royle P.

No. 18 Towards efficient guidelines: how to monitor guideline use in primary care.
   By Hutchinson A, McIntosh A, Cox S, Gilbert C.

No. 19 Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of acute hospital-based spinal cord injuries services: systematic review.
   By Bagnall A-M, Jones L, Richardson G, Duffy S, Riemsma R.

No. 20 Prioritisation of health technology assessment. The PATHS model: methods and case studies.
   By Townsend J, Buxton M, Harper G.


No. 22 The clinical and cost-effectiveness of patient education models for diabetes: a systematic review and economic evaluation.
   By Loveman E, Cave C, Green C, Royle P, Dunn N, Waugh N.

No. 23 The role of modelling in prioritising and planning clinical trials.
   By Chikcott J, Brennan A, Booth A, Karron J, Tappenden P.

No. 24 Cost–benefit evaluation of routine influenza immunisation in people 65–74 years of age.
   By Alsop S, Gosney M, Haycox A, Regan M.

No. 25 The clinical and cost-effectiveness of pulsatile machine perfusion versus cold storage of kidneys for transplantation retrieved from heart-beating and non-heart-beating donors.
   By Wight J, Chikcott J, Holmes M, Brewer N.

No. 26 Can randomised trials rely on existing electronic data? A feasibility study to explore the value of routine data in health technology assessment.
   By Williams JG, Cheung WY, Cohen DR, Hutchings HA, Longo MF, Russell IT.

No. 27 Evaluating non-randomised intervention studies.

No. 28 A randomised controlled trial to assess the impact of a package comprising a patient-orientated, evidence-based self-help guidebook and patient-centred consultations on disease management and satisfaction in inflammatory bowel disease.

No. 29 The effectiveness of diagnostic tests for the assessment of shoulder pain due to soft tissue disorders: a systematic review.
   By Dinnes J, Loveman E, McIntyre L, Waugh N.

No. 30 The value of digital imaging in diabetic retinopathy.

No. 31 Lowering blood pressure to prevent myocardial infarction and stroke: a new preventive strategy.
   By Law M, Wald N, Morris J.

No. 32 Clinical and cost-effectiveness of capcitabine and tegafur with uracil for the treatment of metastatic colorectal cancer: systematic review and economic evaluation.
   By Ward S, Kaltenthaler E, Cowan J, Brewer N.

   By Hummel S, Paisley S, Morgan A, Currie E, Brewer N.

No. 34 Literature searching for clinical and cost-effectiveness studies used in health technology assessment reports carried out for the National Institute for Clinical Excellence appraisal system.
   By Royle P, Waugh N.
No. 35
Systematic review and economic decision modelling for the prevention and treatment of influenza A and B.

No. 36
A randomised controlled trial to evaluate the clinical and cost-effectiveness of Hickman line insertions in adult cancer patients by nurses.
By Boland A, Haycox A, Bagust A, Fitzsimmons L.

No. 37
Redesigning postnatal care: a randomised controlled trial of protocol-based midwifery-led care focused on individual women's physical and psychological health needs.

No. 38
Estimating implied rates of discount in healthcare decision-making.
By West RR, McNabb R, Thompson AGH, Sheldon TA, Grimley Evans J.

No. 39
Systematic review of isolation policies in the hospital management of methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus: a review of the literature with epidemiological and economic modelling.
By Cooper BS, Stone SP, Kibbler CC, Cookson BD, Roberts JA, Medley GF, et al.

No. 40
Treatments for spasticity and pain in multiple sclerosis: a systematic review.
By Beard S, Humm A, Wight J.

No. 41
The inclusion of reports of randomised trials published in languages other than English in systematic reviews.
By Moher D, Pham B, Lawson ML, Klassen TP.

No. 42
The impact of screening on future health-promoting behaviours and health beliefs: a systematic review.

Volume 8, 2004

No. 1
What is the best imaging strategy for acute stroke?
By Wardlaw JM, Keir SL, Seymour J, Lewis S, Sandercrook PAG, Dennis MS, et al.

No. 2
Systematic review and modelling of the investigation of acute and chronic chest pain presenting in primary care.
By Mant J, McManus RJ, Oakes RAI, Delaney BC, Barton PM, Deeks JJ, et al.

No. 3
The effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of microwave and thermal balloon endometrial ablation for heavy menstrual bleeding: a systematic review and economic modelling.

No. 4
A systematic review of the role of bisphosphonates in metastatic disease.

No. 5
Systematic review of the clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of capetitabine (Xeloda®) for locally advanced and/or metastatic breast cancer.
By Jones L, Hawkins N, Westwood M, Wright K, Richardson G, Riemsma R.

No. 6
Effectiveness and efficiency of guideline dissemination and implementation strategies.

No. 7
Clinical effectiveness and costs of the Sugarbaker procedure for the treatment of pseudomyxoma peritonei.
By Bryant J, Clegg AJ, Sidhu MK, Brodin H, Royle P, Davidson P.

No. 8
Psychological treatment for insomnia in the regulation of long-term hypnotic drug use.
By Morgan K, Dixon S, Mathers N, Thompson J, Tomeny M.

No. 9
Improving the evaluation of therapeutic interventions in multiple sclerosis: development of a patient-based measure of outcome.
By Hobart JC, Riazi A, Lamping DL, Fitzpatrick R, Thompson AJ.

No. 10
A systematic review and economic evaluation of magnetic resonance cholangiopancreatography compared with diagnostic endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography.

No. 11
The use of modelling to evaluate new drugs for patients with a chronic condition: the case of antibodies against tumour necrosis factor in rheumatoid arthritis.

No. 12
By Pandor A, Eastham J, Beverley C, Chilcott J, Paisley S.

No. 13
By Czoski-Murray C, Warren E, Chilcott J, Beverley C, Pylllak MA, Cowan J.

No. 14
Routine examination of the newborn: the EMREN study. Evaluation of an extension of the midwife role including a randomised controlled trial of appropriately trained midwives and paediatric senior house officers.

No. 15
Involving consumers in research and development agenda setting for the NHS: developing an evidence-based approach.

No. 16
A multi-centre randomised controlled trial of minimally invasive direct coronary bypass grafting versus percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty with stenting for proximal stenosis of the left anterior descending coronary artery.

No. 17
Does early magnetic resonance imaging influence management or improve outcome in patients referred to secondary care with low back pain? A pragmatic randomised controlled trial.
By Gilbert FJ, Grant AM, Gillan MGC, Vale L, Scott NW, Campbell MK, et al.

No. 18
The clinical and cost-effectiveness of anakinra for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis in adults: a systematic review and economic analysis.
By Clark W, Johanputra P, Barton P, Burls A.
No. 19
A rapid and systematic review and economic evaluation of the clinical and cost-effectiveness of newer drugs for treatment of mania associated with bipolar affective disorder.

No. 20
Liquor-based cytology in cervical screening: an updated rapid and systematic review and economic analysis.

No. 21
Systematic review of the long-term effects and economic consequences of treatments for obesity and implications for health promotion.

No. 22
Autoantibody testing in children with newly diagnosed type 1 diabetes mellitus.
By Dretzke J, Cummins C, Sandercock J, Fry-Smith A, Barrett T, Burs A.

No. 23
Clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of prehospital intravenous fluids in trauma patients.
By Dretzke J, Sandercock J, Bayliss S, Burs A.

No. 24
Newer hypnotic drugs for the short-term management of insomnia: a systematic review and economic evaluation.

No. 25
Development and validation of methods for assessing the quality of diagnostic accuracy studies.
By Whiting P, Rutjes AWS, Dinnes J, Reitsma JB, Bossuyt PMM, Kleijnen J.

No. 26
EVALUATE hysterectomy trial: a multicentre randomised trial comparing abdominal, vaginal and laparoscopic methods of hysterectomy.

No. 27
By Tappenden P, Chilcott JB, Eggington S, Oakley J, McCabe C.

No. 28
By Dalziel K, Round A, Stein K, Garside R, Price A.

No. 29
VenUS E: a randomised controlled trial of two types of bandage for treating venous leg ulcers.
By Iglesias C, Nelson EA, Cullum NA, Torgerson DJ, on behalf of the VenUS Team.

No. 30
Systematic review of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness, and economic evaluation, of myocardial perfusion scintigraphy for the diagnosis and management of angina and myocardial infarction.

No. 31
A pilot study on the use of decision theory and value of information analysis as part of the NHS Health Technology Assessment programme.
By Claxton K, Ginnelly L, Sculpher M, Philip Z, Palmer S.

No. 32
The Social Support and Family Health Study: a randomised controlled trial and economic evaluation of two alternative forms of postnatal support for mothers living in disadvantaged inner-city areas.

No. 33
Psychosocial aspects of genetic screening of pregnant women and newborns: a systematic review.
By Green JM, Hewison J, Bekker HL, Bryant, Cuckle HS.

No. 34
Evaluation of abnormal uterine bleeding: comparison of three outpatient procedures within cohorts defined by age and menopausal status.

No. 35
Coronary artery stents: a rapid systematic review and economic evaluation.

No. 36
Review of guidelines for good practice in decision-analytic modelling in health technology assessment.

No. 37
Rituximab (MabThera) for aggressive non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma: systematic review and economic evaluation.
By Knight C, Hind D, Brewer N, Abbott V.

No. 38
Clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of clopidogrel and modified-release dipyridamole in the secondary prevention of occlusive vascular events: a systematic review and economic evaluation.
By Jones L, Griffin S, Palmer S, Main C, Orton V, Sculpher M, et al.

No. 39
Pegylated interferon α-2a and -2b in combination with ribavirin in the treatment of chronic hepatitis C: a systematic review and economic evaluation.
By Shepherd J, Brodin H, Cave C, Waugh N, Price A, Gabbay J.

No. 40
Clopidogrel used in combination with aspirin compared with aspirin alone in the treatment of non-ST-segment-elevation acute coronary syndromes: a systematic review and economic evaluation.
By Main C, Palmer S, Griffin S, Jones L, Orton V, Sculpher M, et al.

No. 41
Provision, uptake and cost of cardiac rehabilitation programmes: improving services to under-represented groups.
By Beswick AD, Rees K, Griebsch I, Taylor FC, Burke M, West RR, et al.

No. 42
Involving South Asian patients in clinical trials.
By Hussain-Gambles M, Leese B, Akin K, Brown J, Mason S, Tovey P.

No. 43
Clinical and cost-effectiveness of continuous subcutaneous insulin infusion for diabetes.
By Colquitt JL, Green C, Sidhu MK, Hartwell D, Waugh N.

No. 44
Identification and assessment of ongoing trials in health technology assessment reviews.

No. 45
Systematic review and economic evaluation of a long-acting insulin analogue, insulin glargine.
By Warren E, Weatherley-Jones E, Chilcott J, Beverley C.
Volume 9, 2005

No. 1
Randomised controlled multiple treatment comparison to provide a cost-effectiveness rationale for the selection of antimicrobial therapy in acne.


No. 2
Do the findings of case series studies vary significantly according to methodological characteristics?

By Dalziel K, Round A, Stein K, Garside R, Castelnuovo E, Payne L.

No. 3
Improving the referral process for familial breast cancer genetic counselling: findings of three randomised controlled trials of two interventions.


No. 4
Randomised evaluation of alternative electrocutaneous modalities to treat bladder outflow obstruction in men with benign prostatic hyperplasia.

By Fowler C, McAllister W, Plail R, Karim O, Yang Q.

No. 5
A pragmatic randomised controlled trial of the cost-effectiveness of palliative therapies for patients with inoperable oesophageal cancer.

By Shenfine J, McNamee P, Steen N, Bond J, Griffin SM.

No. 6
Impact of computer-aided detection prompts on the sensitivity and specificity of screening mammography.


No. 7
Issues in data monitoring and interim analysis of trials.

By Grant AM, Altman DG, Babiker AB, Campbell MK, Clemens FJ, Darbyshire JH, et al.

No. 8
Lay public’s understanding of equipoise and randomisation in randomised controlled trials.


No. 9
Clinical and cost-effectiveness of electroconvulsive therapy for depressive illness, schizophrenia, catatonia and mania: systematic reviews and economic modelling studies.

By Greenhalgh J, Knight C, Hind D, Beverley C, Walters S.

No. 10
Measurement of health-related quality of life for people with dementia: development of a new instrument (DEMQOL) and an evaluation of current methodology.


No. 11
Clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of drotrecogin alfa (activated) (Xigris) for the treatment of severe sepsis in adults: a systematic review and economic evaluation.


No. 12
A methodological review of how heterogeneity has been examined in systematic reviews of diagnostic test accuracy.

By Dinnes J, Deeks J, Kirby J, Rodenick P.

No. 13
Cervical screening programmes: can automation help? Evidence from systematic reviews, an economic analysis and a simulation modelling exercise applied to the UK.

By Willis BHE, Barton F, Pearmain P, Bryan S, Hyde C.

No. 14
Laparoscopic surgery for inguinal hernia repair: systematic review of effectiveness and economic evaluation.


No. 15
Clinical effectiveness, tolerability and cost-effectiveness of newer drugs for epilepsy in adults: a systematic review and economic evaluation.


No. 16
A randomised controlled trial to compare the cost-effectiveness of tricyclic antidepressants, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors and lofepramine.


No. 17
Clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of immediate angioplasty for acute myocardial infarction: systematic review and economic evaluation.


No. 18
A randomised controlled comparison of alternative strategies in stroke care.

By Kafra L, Evans A, Perez I, Knapp M, Swift C, Donaldson N.

No. 19
The investigation and analysis of critical incidents and adverse events in healthcare.

By Woloshynowych M, Rogers S, Taylor-Adams S, Vincent C.

No. 20
Potential use of routine databases in health technology assessment.

By Raftery J, Roderick P, Stevens A.

No. 21


No. 22
A systematic review and economic evaluation of alendronate, etidronate, risedronate, raloxifene and teriparatide for the prevention and treatment of postmenopausal osteoporosis.

By Stevenson M, Lloyd Jones M, De Nigris E, Brewer N, Davis S, Oakley J.
No. 23
A systematic review to examine the impact of psycho-educational interventions on health outcomes and costs in adults and children with difficult asthma.

No. 24
An evaluation of the costs, effectiveness and quality of renal replacement therapy provision in renal satellite units in England and Wales.

No. 25
Imatinib for the treatment of patients with unresectable and/or metastatic gastrointestinal stromal tumours: systematic review and economic evaluation.

No. 26
Indirect comparisons of competing interventions.

No. 27
Cost-effectiveness of alternative strategies for the initial medical management of non-ST elevation acute coronary syndrome: systematic review and decision-analytical modelling.

No. 28
Outcomes of electrically stimulated gracilis neosphincter surgery.
By Tillin T, Chambers M, Feldman R.

No. 29
The effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of pimecrolimus and tacrolimus for atopic eczema: a systematic review and economic evaluation.

No. 30
Systematic review on urine albumin testing for early detection of diabetic complications.

No. 31
Randomised controlled trial of the cost-effectiveness of water-based therapy for lower limb osteoarthritis.
By Cochrane T, Davey RC, Matthews Edwards SM.

No. 32
Longer term clinical and economic benefits of offering acupuncture care to patients with chronic low back pain.

No. 33
Cost-effectiveness and safety of epidural steroids in the management of sciatica.
By Price C, Arden N, Coglan L, Rogers P.

No. 34
The British Rheumatoid Outcome Study Group (BROS) randomised controlled trial to compare the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of aggressive versus symptomatic therapy in established rheumatoid arthritis.
By Symmons D, Tricker K, Roberts C, Davies L, Dawes P, Scott DL.

No. 35
Conceptual framework and systematic review of the effects of participants’ and professionals’ preferences in randomised controlled trials.

No. 36
The clinical and cost-effectiveness of implantable cardioverter defibrillators: a systematic review.
By Bryant J, Brodin H, Loveman E, Payne E, Clegg A.

No. 37
A trial of problem-solving by community mental health nurses for anxiety, depression and life difficulties among general practice patients. The CPN-GP study.

No. 38
The causes and effects of socio-demographic exclusions from clinical trials.

No. 39
Is hydrotherapy cost-effective? A randomised controlled trial of combined hydrotherapy programmes compared with physiotherapy land techniques in children with juvenile idiopathic arthritis.

No. 40
A randomised controlled trial and cost-effectiveness study of systematic screening (targeted and total population screening) versus routine practice for the detection of atrial fibrillation in people aged 65 and over. The SAFE study.

No. 41
Displaced intracapsular hip fractures in fit, older people: a randomised comparison of reduction and fixation, bipolar hemiarthroplasty.
By Keating JF, Grant A, Masson M, Scott NW, Forbes JF.

No. 42
Long-term outcome of cognitive behaviour therapy clinical trials in central Scotland.

No. 43
The effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of dual-chamber pacemakers compared with single-chamber pacemakers for bradycardia due to atrioventricular block or sick sinus syndrome: systematic review and economic evaluation.
By Castelnuovo E, Stein K, Pitt M, Garside R, Payne E.

No. 44
Newborn screening for congenital heart defects: a systematic review and cost-effectiveness analysis.

No. 45
The clinical and cost-effectiveness of left ventricular assist devices for end-stage heart failure: a systematic review and economic evaluation.

No. 46
The effectiveness of the Heidelberg Retina Tomograph and laser diagnostic glaucoma scanning system (GDx) in detecting and monitoring glaucoma.
By Kwartz AJ, Henson DB, Harper RA, Spencer AF, McLeod D.

No. 47
Clinical and cost-effectiveness of autologous chondrocyte implantation for cartilage defects in knee joints: systematic review and economic evaluation.
No. 48 Systematic review of effectiveness of different treatments for childhood retinoblastoma.

No. 49 Towards evidence-based guidelines for the prevention of venous thromboembolism: systematic reviews of mechanical methods, oral anticoagulation, dextran and regional anaesthesia as thromboprophylaxis.

No. 50 The effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of parent training/education programmes for the treatment of conduct disorder, including oppositional defiant disorder, in children.

Volume 10, 2006

No. 1 The clinical and cost-effectiveness of donepezil, rivastigmine, galantamine and memantine for Alzheimer’s disease.

No. 2 FOOD: a multicentre randomised trial evaluating feeding policies in patients admitted to hospital with a recent stroke.
By Dennis M, Lewis S, Cranwick G, Forbes J.

No. 3 The clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of computed tomography screening for lung cancer: systematic reviews.

No. 4 A systematic review of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of neuroimaging assessments used to visualise the seizure focus in people with refractory epilepsy being considered for surgery.

No. 5 Comparison of conference abstracts and presentations with full-text articles in the health technology assessments of rapidly evolving technologies.
By Dandum Y, Dodd S, Dickson R, Walley T, Haycox A, Williamson PR.

No. 6 Systematic review and evaluation of methods of assessing urinary incontinence.

No. 7 The clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of newer drugs for children with epilepsy. A systematic review.

No. 8 Surveillance of Barrett’s oesophagus: exploring the uncertainty through systematic review, expert workshop and economic modelling.
By Garside R, Pitt M, Somerville M, Stein K, Price A, Gilbert N.

No. 9 Topotecan, pegylated liposomal doxorubicin hydrochloride and paclitaxel for second-line or subsequent treatment of advanced ovarian cancer: a systematic review and economic evaluation.

No. 10 Evaluation of molecular techniques in prediction and diagnosis of cytomegalovirus disease in immunocompromised patients.
By Szczepura A, Westmoreland D, Vinogradova Y, Fox J, Clark M.

No. 11 Screening for thrombophilia in high-risk situations: systematic review and cost-effectiveness analysis. The Thrombosis: Risk and Economic Assessment of Thrombophilia Screening (TREATS) study.

No. 12 A series of systematic reviews to inform a decision analysis for sampling and treating infected diabetic foot ulcers.

No. 13 Randomised clinical trial, observational study and assessment of cost-effectiveness of the treatment of varicose veins (REACTIV trial).

No. 14 The cost-effectiveness of screening for oral cancer in primary care.
By Speight PM, Palmer S, Moles DR, Downer MC, Smith DH, Henriksson M, et al.


No. 17 Randomised controlled trials of conventional antipsychotic versus new atypical drugs, and new atypical drugs versus clozapine, in people with schizophrenia responding poorly to, or intolerant of, current drug treatment.
By Lewis SW, Davies L, Jones PB, Barnes TRE, Murray RM, Kerwin R, et al.

No. 18 Diagnostic tests and algorithms used in the investigation of haematuria: systematic reviews and economic evaluation.

No. 19 Cognitive behavioural therapy in addition to antispasmodic therapy for irritable bowel syndrome in primary care: randomised controlled trial.

No. 20 A systematic review of the clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of enzyme replacement therapies for Fabry’s disease and mucopolysaccharidosis type 1.

No. 21 Health benefits of antiviral therapy for mild chronic hepatitis C: randomised controlled trial and economic evaluation.
By Wright M, Grieve R, Roberts J, Main J, Thomas HC, on behalf of the UK Mild Hepatitis C Trial Investigators.

No. 22 Pressure relieving support surfaces: a randomised evaluation.
No. 23
A systematic review and economic model of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of methylphenidate, dexamethasone and atomoxetine for the treatment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in children and adolescents.


No. 24
The clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of enzyme replacement therapy for Gaucher’s disease: a systematic review.


No. 25
Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of salicylic acid and cryotherapy for cutaneous warts. An economic decision model.


No. 26
A systematic literature review of the effectiveness of non-pharmacological interventions to prevent wandering in dementia and evaluation of the ethical implications and acceptability of their use.


No. 27
A review of the evidence on the effects and costs of implantable cardioverter defibrillator therapy in different patient groups, and modelling of cost-effectiveness and cost-utility for these groups in a UK context.


No. 28
Adefovir dipivoxil and pegylated interferon alfa-2a for the treatment of chronic hepatitis B: a systematic review and economic evaluation.

By Shepherd J, Jones J, Takeda A, Davidson P, Price A.

No. 29

By Harvey S, Stevens K, Harrison D, Armstrong SJ, et al.

No. 30
Accurate, practical and cost-effective assessment of carotid stenosis in the UK.

By Wardlaw JM, Chappell FM, Stevenson M, De Nigris E, Thomas S, Gillard J, et al.

No. 31
Etanercept and infliximab for the treatment of psoriatic arthritis: a systematic review and economic evaluation.


No. 32
The cost-effectiveness of testing for hepatitis C in former injecting drug users.


No. 33
Computerised cognitive behaviour therapy for depression and anxiety update: a systematic review and economic evaluation.


No. 34
Cost-effectiveness of using prognostic information to select women with breast cancer for adjuvant systemic therapy.


No. 35
Psychological therapies including dialectical behaviour therapy for borderline personality disorder: a systematic review and preliminary economic evaluation.


No. 36
Clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of tests for the diagnosis and investigation of urinary tract infection in children: a systematic review and economic model.


No. 37
Cognitive behavioural therapy in chronic fatigue syndrome: a randomised controlled trial of an outpatient group programme.

By O’Dowd H, Gladwell P, Rogers CA, Hollinghurst S, Gregory A.

No. 38


No. 39
The effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of computed tomography screening for coronary artery disease: systematic review.

By Waugh N, Black C, Walker S, McIntyre L, Cummins E, Hills G.

No. 40
What are the clinical outcome and cost-effectiveness of endoscopy undertaken by nurses when compared with doctors? A Multi-Institution Nurse Endoscopy Trial (MINuET).


No. 41
The clinical and cost-effectiveness of oxaliplatin and capcitabine for the adjuvant treatment of colon cancer: systematic review and economic evaluation.

By Pandsor A, Eggington S, Paisley S, Tappenden P, Sutcliffe P.

No. 42
A systematic review of the effectiveness of adalimumab, etanercept and infliximab for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis in adults and an economic evaluation of their cost-effectiveness.


No. 43
Telemedicine in dermatology: a randomised controlled trial.

By Bows IR, Collins K, Walters SJ, McDonagh AJG.

No. 44


No. 45
Clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of laparoscopic surgery for colorectal cancer: systematic reviews and economic evaluation.


No. 46
Etanercept and efalizumab for the treatment of psoriasis: a systematic review.


No. 47
Systematic reviews of clinical decision tools for acute abdominal pain.


No. 48
Evaluation of the ventricular assist device programme in the UK.

No. 50

A systematic review and economic evaluation of population screening for genital chlamydial infection.


No. 49


No. 5

A systematic review of rapid diagnostic tests for the detection of tuberculosis infection.


No. 4

The clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of strut luminal ranelate for the prevention of osteoporotic fragility fractures in postmenopausal women.

By Stevenson M, Davis S, Lloyd-Jones M, Beverly C.

No. 7

Glucocorticoid-induced osteoporosis: a systematic review and cost-utility analysis.

By Kanis JA, Stevenson M, McCloskey EV, Davis S, Lloyd-Jones M.

No. 8

Epidemiological, social, diagnostic and economic evaluation of population screening for genit al chlamydial infection.


No. 9

Methadone and buprenorphine for the management of opioid dependence: a systematic review and economic evaluation.


No. 10

Exercise Evaluation Randomised Trial (EXERT): a randomised trial comparing GP referral for leisure centre-based exercise, community-based walking and advice only.


No. 11

Interferon alfa (pegylated and non-pegylated) and ribavirin for the treatment of mild chronic hepatitis C: a systematic review and economic evaluation.

By Shepherd J, Jones J, Hartwell D, Davidson P, Price A, Waugh N.

No. 12

Systematic review and economic evaluation of bevacizumab and cetuximab for the treatment of metastatic colorectal cancer.

By Tappenden P, Jones R, Paisley S, Carroll C.

No. 13

A systematic review and economic evaluation of epoetin alfa, epoetin beta and darbepoetin alfa in anaemia associated with cancer, especially that attributable to cancer treatment.


No. 14

A systematic review and economic evaluation of statins for the prevention of coronary events.


No. 15

A systematic review of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of different models of community-based respite care for frail older people and their carers.


No. 16

Additional therapy for young children with spastic cerebral palsy: a randomised controlled trial.

By Weindling AM, Cunningham CC, Glenn SM, Edwards RT, Reeves DJ.

No. 17

Screening for type 2 diabetes: literature review and economic modelling.


No. 18

The effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of cinacalcet for secondary hyperparathyroidism in end-stage renal disease patients on dialysis: a systematic review and economic evaluation.


No. 19

The clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of gemcitabine for metastatic breast cancer: a systematic review and economic evaluation.

By Takeda AL, Jones J, Loveman E, Tan SC, Clegg AJ.

No. 20

A systematic review of duplex ultrasound, magnetic resonance angiography and computed tomography angiography for the diagnosis and assessment of symptomatic, lower limb peripheral arterial disease.


No. 21

The clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of treatments for children with idiopathic steroid-resistant nephrotic syndrome: a systematic review.

By Colquitt JL, Kirby J, Green C, Cooper K, Trompetter RS.

No. 22

A systematic review of the routine monitoring of growth in children of primary school age to identify growth-related conditions.


No. 23

Systematic review of the effectiveness of preventing and treating *Staphylococcus aureus* carriage in reducing peritoneal catheter-related infections.

No. 24  The clinical effectiveness and cost of repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation versus electroconvulsive therapy in severe depression: a multicentre pragmatic randomised controlled trial and economic analysis.

No. 25  A randomised controlled trial and economic evaluation of direct versus indirect and individual versus group modes of speech and language therapy for children with primary language impairment.
   By Boyle J, McCartney E, Forbes J, O’Hare A.

No. 26  Hormonal therapies for early breast cancer: systematic review and economic evaluation.
   By Hind D, Ward S, De Nigris E, Simpson E, Carroll C, Wyld L.

No. 27  Cardioprotection against the toxic effects of anthracyclines given to children with cancer: a systematic review.
   By Bryant J, Picot J, Levitt G, Sullivan I, Baxter L, Clegg A.

No. 28  Adalimumab, etanercept and infliximab for the treatment of ankylosing spondylitis: a systematic review and economic evaluation.

No. 29  Prenatal screening and treatment strategies to prevent group B streptococcal and other bacterial infections in early infancy: cost-effectiveness and expected value of information analyses.

No. 30  Clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of bone morphogenetic proteins in the non-healing of fractures and spinal fusion: a systematic review.

No. 31  A randomised controlled trial of postoperative radiotherapy following breast-conserving surgery in a minimum-risk older population. The PRIME trial.

No. 32  Current practice, accuracy, effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of the school entry hearing screen.

No. 33  The clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of inhaled insulin in diabetes mellitus: a systematic review and economic evaluation.
   By Black C, Cummins E, Royle P, Philip S, Waugh N.

No. 34  Surveillance of cirrhosis for hepatocellular carcinoma: systematic review and economic analysis.

No. 35  The Birmingham Rehabilitation Uptake Maximisation Study (BRUM). Homebased compared with hospital-based cardiac rehabilitation in a multi-ethnic population: cost-effectiveness and patient adherence.

No. 36  A systematic review of the clinical, public health and cost-effectiveness of rapid diagnostic tests for the detection and identification of bacterial intestinal pathogens in faeces and food.

No. 37  A randomised controlled trial examining the longer-term outcomes of standard versus new antiepileptic drugs. The SANAD trial.

No. 38  Clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of different models of managing long-term oral anti-coagulation therapy: a systematic review and economic modelling.

No. 39  A systematic review and economic model of the clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of interventions for preventing relapse in people with bipolar disorder.

No. 40  Taxanes for the adjuvant treatment of early breast cancer: systematic review and economic evaluation.
   By Ward S, Simpson E, Davis S, Hind D, Rees A, Wilkinson A.

No. 41  The clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of screening for open angle glaucoma: a systematic review and economic evaluation.

No. 42  Acceptability, benefit and costs of early screening for hearing disability: a study of potential screening tests and models.
   By Davis A, Smith P, Ferguson M, Stephens D, Gianopoulos I.

No. 43  Contamination in trials of educational interventions.

No. 44  Overview of the clinical effectiveness of positron emission tomography imaging in selected cancers.
   By Facey K, Bradbury I, Laking G, Payne E.

No. 45  The effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of carmustine implants and temozolomide for the treatment of newly diagnosed high-grade glioma: a systematic review and economic evaluation.

No. 46  Drug-eluting stents: a systematic review and economic evaluation.

No. 47  The clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of cardiac resynchronisation (biventricular pacing) for heart failure: systematic review and economic model.

No. 48  Recruitment to randomised trials: strategies for trial enrolment and participation study. The STEPS study.
   By Campbell MK, Snowdon C, Francis D, Elbourne D, McDonald AM, Knight R, et al.
140

No. 49
Cost-effectiveness of functional cardiac testing in the diagnosis and management of coronary artery disease: a randomised controlled trial. The CECaT trial.

No. 50
Evaluation of diagnostic tests when there is no gold standard. A review of methods.
By Rutjes AWS, Reitsma JB, Coomarasamy A, Khan KS, Bossuyt PMM.

No. 51
Systematic reviews of the clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of proton pump inhibitors in acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding.

No. 52
A review and critique of modelling in prioritising and designing screening programmes.

No. 53
An assessment of the impact of the NHS Health Technology Assessment Programme.
By Hanney S, Buxton M, Green C, Coulson D, Raftery J.

Volume 12, 2008

No. 1
A systematic review and economic model of switching from nonglycopeptide to glycopeptide antibiotic prophylaxis for surgery.

No. 2
‘Cut down to quit’ with nicotine replacement therapies in smoking cessation: a systematic review of effectiveness and economic analysis.
By Wâng D, Connock M, Barton P, Fry-Smith A, Aveyard P, Moore D.

No. 3
A systematic review of the effectiveness of strategies for reducing fracture risk in children with juvenile idiopathic arthritis with additional data on long-term risk of fracture and cost of disease management.

No. 4
By Charlesworth G, Shepstone L, Wilson E, Thalanany M, Mugford M, Boland F.

No. 5
A multi-centre retrospective cohort study comparing the efficacy, safety and cost-effectiveness of hysterectomy and uterine artery embolisation for the treatment of symptomatic uterine fibroids. The HOPEFUL study.

No. 6
Methods of prediction and prevention of pre-eclampsia: systematic reviews of accuracy and effectiveness literature with economic modelling.

No. 7
The use of economic evaluations in NHS decision-making: a review and empirical investigation.
By Williams I, Mclver S, Moore D, Bryan S.

No. 8
Stapled haemorrhoidectomy (haemorrhoidopexy) for the treatment of haemorrhoids: a systematic review and economic evaluation.

No. 9
The clinical effectiveness of diabetes education models for Type 2 diabetes: a systematic review.
By Loveman E, Frampton GK, Clegg AJ.

No. 10
Payment to healthcare professionals for patient recruitment to trials: systematic review and qualitative study.
By Raftery J, Bryant J, Powell J, Kerr C, Hawker S.

No. 11
Cyclooxygenase-2 selective non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (etodolac, meloxicam, celecoxib, rofecoxib, etoricoxib, valdecoxib and lumiracoxib) for osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis: a systematic review and economic evaluation.

No. 12
The clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of central venous catheters treated with anti-infective agents in preventing bloodstream infections: a systematic review and economic evaluation.

No. 13
Stepped treatment of older adults on laxatives. The STOOL trial.

No. 14
A randomised controlled trial of cognitive behaviour therapy in adolescents with major depression treated by selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors. The ADAPT trial.

No. 15
The use of irinotecan, oxaliplatin and raltitrexed for the treatment of advanced colorectal cancer: systematic review and economic evaluation.
By Hind D, Tappenden P, Tumur I, Eggington E, Sutchiffe P, Ryan A.

No. 16
Ranibizumab and pegaptanib for the treatment of age-related macular degeneration: a systematic review and economic evaluation.

No. 17
Systematic review of the clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of 64-slice or higher computed tomography angiography as an alternative to invasive coronary angiography in the investigation of coronary artery disease.

No. 18
Structural neuroimaging in psychosis: a systematic review and economic evaluation.

No. 19
Systematic review and economic analysis of the comparative effectiveness of different inhaled corticosteroids and their usage with long-acting beta, agonists for the treatment of chronic asthma in adults and children aged 12 years and over.
No. 20
Systematic review and economic analysis of the comparative effectiveness of different inhaled corticosteroids and their usage with long-acting beta_2 agonists for the treatment of chronic asthma in children under the age of 12 years.

No. 21
Ezetimibe for the treatment of hypercholesterolaemia: a systematic review and economic evaluation.

No. 22
Topical or oral ibuprofen for chronic knee pain in older people. The TOIB study.

No. 23
A prospective randomised comparison of minor surgery in primary and secondary care. The MiSTIC trial.

No. 24
A review and critical appraisal of measures of therapist–patient interactions in mental health settings.

No. 25
The clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of screening programmes for amibypenia and strabismus in children up to the age of 4–5 years: a systematic review and economic evaluation.
By Carlton J, Karnon J, Czoski-Murray C, Smith KJ, Marr J.

No. 26
A systematic review of the clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness and economic modelling of minimal incision total hip replacement approaches in the management of arthritic disease of the hip.

No. 27
A preliminary model-based assessment of the cost–utility of a screening programme for early age-related macular degeneration.

No. 28
Intravenous magnesium sulphate and sotalol for prevention of atrial fibrillation after coronary artery bypass surgery: a systematic review and economic evaluation.
By Shepherd J, Jones J, Brampton GK, Tanajewski L, Turner D, Price A.

No. 29
Absorbent products for urinary/faecal incontinence: a comparative evaluation of key product categories.

No. 30
A systematic review of repetitive functional task practice with modelling of resource use, costs and effectiveness.

No. 31
The effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of minimal access surgery amongst people with gastro-oesophageal reflux disease – a UK collaborative study. The TEFLEX trial.

No. 32
Time to full publication of studies of anti-cancer medicines for breast cancer and the potential for publication bias: a short systematic review.
By Takeda A, Loveman E, Harris P, Hartwell D, Welch K.

No. 33
Performance of screening tests for child physical abuse in accident and emergency departments.
By Woodman J, Pitt M, Wentz R, Taylor B, Hodes D, Gilbert RE.

No. 34
Curative catheter ablation in atrial fibrillation and typical atrial flutter: systematic review and economic evaluation.

No. 35
Systematic review and economic modelling of effectiveness and cost utility of surgical treatments for men with benign prostatic enlargement.

No. 36
Immunophylaxis against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) with palivizumab in children: a systematic review and economic evaluation.
By Wang D, Cummins C, Bayliss S, Sandercock J, Burris A.
No. 10
Routine antenatal anti-D prophylaxis for RhD-negative women: a systematic review and economic evaluation.
By Pilgrim H, Lloyd-Jones M, Rees A.

No. 11
Amitriptyline, oseltamivir and zanamivir for the prophylaxis of influenza (including a review of existing guidance no. 67): a systematic review and economic evaluation.

No. 12
Improving the evaluation of therapeutic interventions in multiple sclerosis: the role of new psychometric methods.
By Hobart J, Cano S.

No. 13
Treatment of severe ankle sprain: a pragmatic randomised controlled trial comparing the clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of three types of mechanical ankle support with tubular bandage. The CAST trial.
By Cooke MW, Marsh JL, Clark M, Nakash R, Jarvis RM, Hutton JL, et al., on behalf of the CAST trial group.

No. 14
Non-occupational postexposure prophylaxis for HIV: a systematic review.
By Bryant J, Baxter L, Hird S.

No. 15
Blood glucose self-monitoring in type 2 diabetes: a randomised controlled trial.

No. 16
How far does screening women for domestic (partner) violence in different health-care settings meet criteria for a screening programme? Systematic reviews of nine UK National Screening Committee criteria.

No. 17
Spinal cord stimulation for chronic pain of neuropathic or ischaemic origin: systematic review and economic evaluation.
By Simpson, EL, Duenas A, Holmes MW, Papaioannou D, Chilcott J.

No. 18
The role of magnetic resonance imaging in the identification of suspected acoustic neuroma: a systematic review of clinical and cost-effectiveness and natural history.

No. 19
Dipsticks and diagnostic algorithms in urinary tract infection: development and validation, randomised trial, economic analysis, observational cohort and qualitative study.

No. 20
Systematic review of respite care in the frail elderly.

No. 21
Neuroleptics in the treatment of aggressive challenging behaviour for people with intellectual disabilities: a randomised controlled trial (NACHBID).

No. 22
Randomised controlled trial to determine the clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors plus supportive care, versus supportive care alone, for mild to moderate depression with somatic symptoms in primary care: the THREAD (THREshold for AntiDepressant response) study.

No. 23
Diagnostic strategies using DNA testing for hereditary haemochromatosis in at-risk populations: a systematic review and economic evaluation.

No. 24
Enhanced external counterpulsation for the treatment of stable angina and heart failure: a systematic review and economic analysis.

No. 25
Development of a decision support tool for primary care management of patients with abnormal liver function tests without clinically apparent liver disease: a record-linkage population cohort study and decision analysis (ALFIE).

No. 26
A systematic review of presumed consent systems for deceased organ donation.
By Rithalia A, McDaid C, Suekarran S, Norman G, Myers L, Dowden A.

No. 27
Paracetamol and ibuprofen for the treatment of fever in children: the PITCH randomised controlled trial.

No. 28
A randomised controlled trial to compare minimally invasive glucose monitoring devices with conventional monitoring in the management of insulin-treated diabetes mellitus (MITRE).

No. 29
Sensitivity analysis in economic evaluation: an audit of NICE current practice and a review of its use and value in decision-making.
By Andronis L, Barton P, Bryan S.

Suppl. 1
Trastuzumab for the treatment of primary breast cancer in HER2-positive women: a single technology appraisal.
By Ward S, Pilgrim H, Hind D.

Docetaxel for the adjuvant treatment of early node-positive breast cancer: a single technology appraisal.
By Chilcott J, Lloyd Jones M, Wilkinson A.

The use of paclitaxel in the management of early stage breast cancer.

Rituximab for the first-line treatment of stage III/IV follicular non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma.

Bortezomib for the treatment of multiple myeloma patients.

Fludarabine phosphate for the first-line treatment of chronic lymphocytic leukaemia.

Erlotinib for the treatment of relapsed non-small cell lung cancer.

Cetuximab plus radiotherapy for the treatment of locally advanced squamous cell carcinoma of the head and neck.

Infliximab for the treatment of adults with psoriasis.
By Loveman E, Turner D, Hartwell D, Cooper K, Clegg A.
No. 30

Psychological interventions for postnatal depression: cluster randomised trial and economic evaluation. The PaNDER trial.


No. 31

The effect of different treatment durations of clopidogrel in patients with non-ST-segment elevation acute coronary syndromes: a systematic review and value of information analysis.


No. 32

Systematic review and individual patient data meta-analysis of diagnosis of heart failure, with modelling of implications of different diagnostic strategies in primary care.


No. 33

A multicentre randomised controlled trial of the use of continuous positive airway pressure and non-invasive positive pressure ventilation in the early treatment of patients presenting to the emergency department with severe acute cardiogenic pulmonary oedema: the 3CPO trial.

By Gray AJ, Goodacre S, Newby DE, Masson MA, Sampson F, Dixon S, et al., on behalf of the 3CPO study investigators.

No. 34

Early high-dose lipid-lowering therapy to avoid cardiac events: a systematic review and economic evaluation.

By Ara R, Pandor A, Stevens J, Rees A, Rafa R.

No. 35

Adefovir dipivoxil and pegylated interferon alpha for the treatment of chronic hepatitis B: an updated systematic review and economic evaluation.


No. 36

Methods to identify postnatal depression in primary care: an integrated evidence synthesis and value of information analysis.


No. 37

A double-blind randomised placebo-controlled trial of topical intranasal corticosteroids in 4- to 11-year-old children with persistent bilateral otitis media with effusion in primary care.


No. 38

The effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of methods of storing donated kidneys from deceased donors: a systematic review and economic model.

By Bond M, Pitt M, Akoh J, Moxham T, Hoyle M, Anderson R.

No. 39

Rehabilitation of older patients: day hospital compared with rehabilitation at home. A randomised controlled trial.

By Parker SG, Oliver P, Pennington M, Bond J, Jagger C, Enderby PM, et al.

No. 40

Breastfeeding promotion for infants in neonatal units: a systematic review and economic analysis.


No. 41

The clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of bariatric (weight loss) surgery for obesity: a systematic review and economic evaluation.


No. 42

Rapid testing for group B streptococcus during labour: a test accuracy study with evaluation of acceptability and cost-effectiveness.


No. 43

Screening to prevent spontaneous preterm birth: systematic reviews of accuracy and effectiveness literature with economic modelling.


No. 44

The effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of cochlear implants for severe to profound deafness in children and adults: a systematic review and economic model.


Suppl. 2

Gemcitabine for the treatment of metastatic breast cancer.

By Jones J, Takeda A, Tan SC, Cooper K, Loveman E, Clegg A.

Varenicline in the management of smoking cessation: a single technology appraisal.

By Hind D, Tappenden P, Peters J, Kenjegalieva K.

Alteplase for the treatment of acute ischaemic stroke: a single technology appraisal.

By Lloyd Jones M, Holmes M.

Rituximab for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis.


Omalizumab for the treatment of severe persistent allergic asthma.


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By Boland A, Bagust A, Hockenhull J, Davis H, Chi F, Dickson R.

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By Turner D, Picot J, Cooper K, Loveman E.

Dabigatran etexilate for the prevention of venous thromboembolism in patients undergoing elective hip and knee surgery: a single technology appraisal.

By Holmes M, C Carroll C, Papiaoumou D.

Romiplostim for the treatment of chronic immune or idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura: a single technology appraisal.


Sunitinib for the treatment of gastrointestinal stromal tumours: a critique of the submission from Pfizer.

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No. 45

Vitamin K to prevent fractures in older women: systematic review and economic evaluation.

By Stevenson M, Lloyd-Jones M, Papiaoumou D.

No. 46

The effects of biofeedback for the treatment of essential hypertension: a systematic review.

By Greenhalgh J, Dickson R, Dundar Y.

No. 47

A randomised controlled trial of the use of acidovit and/or prednisolone for the early treatment of Bell’s palsy: the BELLS study.


Suppl. 3

Lapatinib for the treatment of HER2-overexpressing breast cancer.

By Jones J, Takeda A, Picot J, von Keyserlingk C, Clegg A.

Infliximab for the treatment of ulcerative colitis.

By Hyde C, Bryan S, Juarez-Garcia A, Andromis L, Fry-Smith A.
Rimonabant for the treatment of overweight and obese people.

Telbivudine for the treatment of chronic hepatitis B infection.
By Hartwell D, Jones J, Harris P, Cooper K.

Entecavir for the treatment of chronic hepatitis B infection.
By Shepherd J, Gospodarevskaya E, Frampton G, Cooper, K.

Febuxostat for the treatment of hyperuricaemia in people with gout: a single technology appraisal.
By Stevenson M, Pandor A.

Rivaroxaban for the prevention of venous thromboembolism: a single technology appraisal.
By Stevenson M, Pandor A.

Cetuximab for the treatment of recurrent and/or metastatic squamous cell carcinoma of the head and neck.

Mifamurtide for the treatment of osteosarcoma: a single technology appraisal.
By Pandor A, Fitzgerald P, Stevenson M, Papaioannou D.

Ustekinumab for the treatment of moderate to severe psoriasis.
By Gospodarevskaya E, Picot J, Cooper K, Loveman E, Takeda A.

No. 48
Endovascular stents for abdominal aortic aneurysms: a systematic review and economic model.

No. 49
Clinical and cost-effectiveness of epoprostenol, iloprost, bosentan, sitaxentan and sildenafil for pulmonary arterial hypertension within their licensed indications: a systematic review and economic evaluation.

No. 50
Cessation of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder drugs in the young (CADDY) – a pharmacoepidemiological and qualitative study.

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The clinical effectiveness of glucosamine and chondroitin supplements in slowing or arresting progression of osteoarthritis of the knee: a systematic review and economic evaluation.
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<td>Dr Lesley Wise, Unit Manager, Pharmacoepidemiology Research Unit, VRMM, Medicines &amp; Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency</td>
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<td>Dr Ursula Wells</td>
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