

Changing eating behaviours to treat childhood obesity in the community using Mandolean: the Community Mandolean randomised controlled trial (ComMando) – a pilot study

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Plain English summary

The Community Mandolean randomised controlled trial: a pilot study

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This trial was designed to see if teaching obese children aged 5–11 years to eat more slowly and to consider how full they felt while eating would increase weight loss above that achieved with the usual advice given to families about a healthy diet and increasing activity levels. Participants were randomly allocated to usual advice or usual advice together with the device called Mandolean that trains people to eat more slowly. All treatment was provided in general practice by nurses from within community care. To help the child with the Mandolean, a parent was also given the same device and both child and parent were asked to use the device at their main meal every day. The study had a pilot (test) phase to check we could recruit sufficient families, get the children to eat off the Mandolean most days and engage the families enough to attend most of their study appointments. The pilot trial did progress to the main trial for a short period of time but was terminated on review by the Health Technology Assessment programme as it was felt we would be unable to recruit sufficient families to take part even though we contacted over 10,000 in all, of which 1500 would have had an eligible child in the weight range. Furthermore, only 20% of those given the Mandolean used it regularly enough to be likely to change eating behaviours long term, and non-attendance at clinic appointments was too high at over 50%. Thus, none of the targets for the pilot study were met. This weight management intervention for children did not seem to engage the target population and families found it too time-consuming or complex to follow.

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