

Pilot study of a randomised trial of a guided e-learning health promotion intervention for managers based on management standards for the improvement of employee well-being and reduction of sickness absence: the GEM (Guided E-learning for Managers) study

Stephen A Stansfeld,^{1*} Lee Berney,¹ Kamaldeep Bhui,¹ Tarani Chandola,² Céire Costelloe,³ Natalia Hounsome,³ Sally Kerry,³ Doris Lanz¹ and Jill Russell³

¹Centre for Psychiatry, Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry, Queen Mary University of London, London, UK

²Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research, School of Social Sciences, University of Manchester, Manchester, UK

³Centre for Primary Care and Public Health, Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry, Queen Mary University of London, London, UK

*Corresponding author

Declared competing interests of authors: We confirm that there are no conflicting or competing interests in respect of DeltaNet International Ltd as the Anderson Peak Performance (APP) gateway and the companies responsible for website and logo design.

Published August 2015

DOI: 10.3310/phr03090

Plain English summary

A guided e-learning health promotion intervention for managers: the GEM study

Public Health Research 2015; Vol. 3: No. 9

DOI: 10.3310/phr03090

NIHR Journals Library www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk

Plain English summary

Good work is good for health and well-being. Key to maintaining and improving employee well-being is the knowledge and practice of their managers. There have been very few systematic studies of manager training in relation to employee well-being and sickness absence. This pilot study tested the acceptability and feasibility of using an already developed e-learning program for managers to help managers understand and learn how to support and value their employees. This program was completed online by managers in separate modules over 10 weeks. We recruited 424 employees and 41 managers from a mental health trust. Three groups of employees and their managers were randomised to receive the intervention and one group was the control group in which managers did not receive the intervention. Employees completed work and health questionnaires before and after the intervention. There was only a very small effect of the intervention on employees' well-being and levels of psychological distress. Accompanying qualitative research demonstrated that the intervention was acceptable and interesting to managers who took part. Some managers said that they had too little time to complete the intervention and fewer managers completed the intervention than we hoped. The trial and the intervention were feasible to those who took part. The economic assessment of the trial was also feasible. A future trial may need to gain more buy-in from senior managers for the trial, encourage managers to complete the intervention, leave a longer time for the intervention to work and strengthen the intervention to encourage behaviour change in managers.

Public Health Research

ISSN 2050-4381 (Print)

ISSN 2050-439X (Online)

This journal is a member of and subscribes to the principles of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) (www.publicationethics.org/).

Editorial contact: nihredit@southampton.ac.uk

The full PHR archive is freely available to view online at www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/phr. Print-on-demand copies can be purchased from the report pages of the NIHR Journals Library website: www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk

Criteria for inclusion in the *Public Health Research* journal

Reports are published in *Public Health Research* (PHR) if (1) they have resulted from work for the PHR programme, and (2) they are of a sufficiently high scientific quality as assessed by the reviewers and editors.

Reviews in *Public Health Research* are termed 'systematic' when the account of the search appraisal and synthesis methods (to minimise biases and random errors) would, in theory, permit the replication of the review by others.

PHR programme

The Public Health Research (PHR) programme, part of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), evaluates public health interventions, providing new knowledge on the benefits, costs, acceptability and wider impacts of non-NHS interventions intended to improve the health of the public and reduce inequalities in health. The scope of the programme is multi-disciplinary and broad, covering a range of interventions that improve public health. The Public Health Research programme also complements the NIHR Health Technology Assessment programme which has a growing portfolio evaluating NHS public health interventions.

For more information about the PHR programme please visit the website: <http://www.nets.nihr.ac.uk/programmes/phr>

This report

The research reported in this issue of the journal was funded by the PHR programme as project number 10/3007/06. The contractual start date was in April 2013. The final report began editorial review in December 2014 and was accepted for publication in April 2015. The authors have been wholly responsible for all data collection, analysis and interpretation, and for writing up their work. The PHR editors and production house have tried to ensure the accuracy of the authors' report and would like to thank the reviewers for their constructive comments on the final report document. However, they do not accept liability for damages or losses arising from material published in this report.

This report presents independent research funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The views and opinions expressed by authors in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the NHS, the NIHR, NETSCC, the PHR programme or the Department of Health. If there are verbatim quotations included in this publication the views and opinions expressed by the interviewees are those of the interviewees and do not necessarily reflect those of the authors, those of the NHS, the NIHR, NETSCC, the PHR programme or the Department of Health.

© Queen's Printer and Controller of HMSO 2015. This work was produced by Stansfeld *et al.* under the terms of a commissioning contract issued by the Secretary of State for Health. This issue may be freely reproduced for the purposes of private research and study and extracts (or indeed, the full report) may be included in professional journals provided that suitable acknowledgement is made and the reproduction is not associated with any form of advertising. Applications for commercial reproduction should be addressed to: NIHR Journals Library, National Institute for Health Research, Evaluation, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre, Alpha House, University of Southampton Science Park, Southampton SO16 7NS, UK.

Published by the NIHR Journals Library (www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk), produced by Prepress Projects Ltd, Perth, Scotland (www.prepress-projects.co.uk).

Public Health Research Editor-in-Chief

Professor Martin White Professor of Public Health, Institute of Health & Society, Newcastle University and Honorary Consultant in Public Health with Public Health England

NIHR Journals Library Editor-in-Chief

Professor Tom Walley Director, NIHR Evaluation, Trials and Studies and Director of the HTA Programme, UK

NIHR Journals Library Editors

Professor Ken Stein Chair of HTA Editorial Board and Professor of Public Health, University of Exeter Medical School, UK

Professor Andree Le May Chair of NIHR Journals Library Editorial Group (EME, HS&DR, PGfAR, PHR journals)

Dr Martin Ashton-Key Consultant in Public Health Medicine/Consultant Advisor, NETSCC, UK

Professor Matthias Beck Chair in Public Sector Management and Subject Leader (Management Group), Queen's University Management School, Queen's University Belfast, UK

Professor Aileen Clarke Professor of Public Health and Health Services Research, Warwick Medical School, University of Warwick, UK

Dr Tessa Crilly Director, Crystal Blue Consulting Ltd, UK

Dr Peter Davidson Director of NETSCC, HTA, UK

Ms Tara Lamont Scientific Advisor, NETSCC, UK

Professor Elaine McColl Director, Newcastle Clinical Trials Unit, Institute of Health and Society, Newcastle University, UK

Professor William McGuire Professor of Child Health, Hull York Medical School, University of York, UK

Professor Geoffrey Meads Professor of Health Sciences Research, Faculty of Education, University of Winchester, UK

Professor John Norrie Health Services Research Unit, University of Aberdeen, UK

Professor John Powell Consultant Clinical Adviser, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), UK

Professor James Raftery Professor of Health Technology Assessment, Wessex Institute, Faculty of Medicine, University of Southampton, UK

Dr Rob Riemsma Reviews Manager, Kleijnen Systematic Reviews Ltd, UK

Professor Helen Roberts Professor of Child Health Research, UCL Institute of Child Health, UK

Professor Helen Snooks Professor of Health Services Research, Institute of Life Science, College of Medicine, Swansea University, UK

Professor Jim Thornton Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of Nottingham, UK

Please visit the website for a list of members of the NIHR Journals Library Board:
www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/about/editors

Editorial contact: nihredit@southampton.ac.uk