

The Ballseye programme: a mixed-methods programme of research in traditional sexual health and alternative community settings to improve the sexual health of men in the UK

Claudia Estcourt,^{1,2,3*} Lorna Sutcliffe,¹
Catherine H Mercer,⁴ Andrew Copas,⁴
John Saunders,^{1,2} Tracy E Roberts,⁵ Sebastian S Fuller,^{1,6}
Louise J Jackson,⁵ Andrew John Sutton,⁵
Peter J White,^{7,8,9} Ruthie Birger,^{7,8} Greta Rait,¹⁰
Anne Johnson,⁴ Graham Hart,⁴ Pamela Muniina⁴
and Jackie Cassell¹¹

¹Centre for Immunology and Infectious Disease, Blizard Institute, Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry, London, UK

²Barts Health NHS Trust, London, UK

³School of Health and Life Sciences, Glasgow Caledonian University, Glasgow, UK

⁴Research Department of Infection and Population Health, University College London, London, UK

⁵Health Economics Unit, School of Health and Population Sciences, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK

⁶Public Health England, London, UK

⁷Medical Research Council Centre for Outbreak Analysis and Modelling, Imperial College London, London, UK

⁸National Institute for Health Research Health Protection Research Unit in Modelling Methodology, Department of Infectious Disease Epidemiology, School of Public Health, Imperial College London, London, UK

⁹Modelling and Economics Unit, Centre for Infectious Disease Surveillance and Control, Public Health England, London, UK

¹⁰PRIMENT Clinical Trials Unit, Research Department of Primary Care and Population Health, University College London, London, UK

¹¹Division of Primary Care and Public Health, Brighton and Sussex Medical School, University of Brighton, Brighton, UK

*Corresponding author

Declared competing interests of authors: Claudia Estcourt reports grants from the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Health Technology Assessment (HTA) programme and the UK Clinical Research Collaboration during the conduct of the study. Peter J White reports grants from the Medical Research Council and the NIHR during the conduct of the study. Ruthie Birger reports grants from the NIHR during the conduct of the study. Greta Rait reports grants from the NIHR during the conduct of the study. Outside the submitted work Anne Johnson is governor of the Wellcome Trust. Jackie Cassell reports funding from the NIHR HTA programme as principal investigator for the study 'The relative clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of three contrasting approaches to partner notification for curable sexually transmitted infections: a cluster randomised trial in primary care' (reference number 07/43/01), for which the final report has been published [Cassell JA, Dodds J, Estcourt C, Llewellyn C, Lanza S, Richens J, *et al*. The relative clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of three contrasting approaches to partner notification for curable sexually transmitted infections: a cluster randomised trial in primary care. *Health Technol Assess* 2015;**19**(5)].

Published December 2016

DOI: 10.3310/pgfar04200

Plain English summary

The Ballseye programme

Programme Grants for Applied Research 2016; Vol. 4: No. 20

DOI: 10.3310/pgfar04200

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

Plain English summary

The sexual health of people in the UK is poor. It is a particular problem for men, largely because men do not seem to take up the offer of check-ups, or be offered check-ups, for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) as frequently as women, with the reasons for this unclear. We also do not know the best selection of check-up STI tests that we should offer men with no symptoms and it is unclear how we should best arrange testing and treatment for men who have had sex with somebody with a STI (partner notification).

This research addressed these uncertainties in the delivery of care for men with STI concerns. We used different research methods including two trials, mathematical modelling, economic analyses, national surveys and interviews with men themselves.

We found that men prefer going to their general practitioner (GP) or sexual health clinic to get tested for STIs rather than non-medical settings. However, if access to local health services is poor, offering screening in local football clubs could be a good alternative. We also found that national recommendations for the tests that should be included in check-ups for men are good value for money for the NHS. Our new ways of getting treatment to men who had been exposed to a STI showed promise but were not particularly popular.

Future research needs to discover how to increase GP screening for STIs for men, consider the issues for men who have sex with men and further improve partner notification.

Programme Grants for Applied Research

ISSN 2050-4322 (Print)

ISSN 2050-4330 (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 PGfAR archive is freely available to view online at www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/pgfar. 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 *Programme Grants for Applied Research* journal

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

Programme Grants for Applied Research programme

The Programme Grants for Applied Research (PGfAR) programme, part of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), was set up in 2006 to produce independent research findings that will have practical application for the benefit of patients and the NHS in the relatively near future. The Programme is managed by the NIHR Central Commissioning Facility (CCF) with strategic input from the Programme Director.

The programme is a national response mode funding scheme that aims to provide evidence to improve health outcomes in England through promotion of health, prevention of ill health, and optimal disease management (including safety and quality), with particular emphasis on conditions causing significant disease burden.

For more information about the PGfAR programme please visit the website: <http://www.nihr.ac.uk/funding/programme-grants-for-applied-research.htm>

This report

The research reported in this issue of the journal was funded by PGfAR as project number RP-PG-0707-10208. The contractual start date was in February 2009. The final report began editorial review in May 2015 and was accepted for publication in December 2015. As the funder, the PGfAR programme agreed the research questions and study designs in advance with the investigators. The authors have been wholly responsible for all data collection, analysis and interpretation, and for writing up their work. The PGfAR 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, CCF, NETSCC, PGfAR 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 PGfAR programme or the Department of Health.

© Queen's Printer and Controller of HMSO 2016. This work was produced by Estcourt *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).

Programme Grants for Applied Research Editor-in-Chief

Professor Paul Little Professor of Primary Care Research, University of Southampton, UK

NIHR Journals Library Editor-in-Chief

Professor Tom Walley Director, NIHR Evaluation, Trials and Studies and Director of the EME 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 Eugenia Cronin Senior Scientific Advisor, Wessex Institute, UK

Ms Tara Lamont Scientific Advisor, NETSCC, UK

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

Professor Geoffrey Meads Professor of Health Sciences Research, Health and Wellbeing Research Group, University of Winchester, UK

Professor John Norrie Chair in Medical Statistics, University of Edinburgh, 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 Jonathan Ross Professor of Sexual Health and HIV, University Hospital Birmingham, 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

Professor Martin Underwood Director, Warwick Clinical Trials Unit, Warwick Medical School, University of Warwick, 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