

Start2quit: a randomised clinical controlled trial to evaluate the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of using personal tailored risk information and taster sessions to increase the uptake of the NHS Stop Smoking Services

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Plain English summary

The Start2quit RCT

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Plain English summary

The NHS Stop Smoking Services (SSSs) offer help to stop smoking, but < 5% of smokers use these services, and recently there has been a large decrease in uptake. We developed an intervention to persuade more smokers to get help to try to quit. We wrote to them directly with a letter about their personal health risks and invited them to a 'Come and Try it' taster session to find out more about the SSS. At the end of a 6-month period we compared the number of people who had attended the SSS after receiving this letter and invitation with the number of people who attended after receiving a standard letter advertising the service. We also measured the number of people in each group who had quit.

Eighteen SSSs and 99 practices within the SSS areas took part in the trial. We identified smokers from records in participating practices and wrote to them inviting them to take part in the research; 4384 smokers agreed and were randomised to the intervention group ($n = 2636$) or to the control group ($n = 1748$).

More people who received the personal letter and invitation attended at least one session of a 6-week SSS course than people who received the standard letter (17.4% vs. 9.0%). At 6 months more people had quit (stopped smoking for at least 7 days) in the intervention group than in the control group (9.0% vs. 5.6%). Although the intervention is not likely to be cost-effective in the short term, it is likely to be over a lifetime horizon.

This programme of recruitment offers an alternative method for promoting the service and could be used to raise awareness of the SSS.

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