

The clinical effectiveness of individual behaviour change interventions to reduce risky sexual behaviour after a negative human immunodeficiency virus test in men who have sex with men: systematic and realist reviews and intervention development

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Plain English summary

Interventions to reduce risky sexual behaviour after a negative HIV test

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Plain English summary

The problem

There is a lack of guidance regarding human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection prevention in the UK. When guidance does exist, it is quite general. It does not provide detail about particular interventions that can change risky sexual behaviour among men who have sex with men (MSM).

How we addressed the problem

We looked at published scientific studies that described interventions for MSM and were designed to change sexual risk-related behaviour (e.g. increase condom use) after receiving a negative result from a HIV infection test. We wanted to know if these behaviour change interventions actually worked. We also wanted to know how they worked and why.

What we found

We found that these interventions improved sexual risk-related behaviour. It was more difficult to understand how and why they worked, but it was possible to set out the key components of these interventions. These key components included delivering interventions face to face immediately after HIV infection testing, supporting men in thinking through the consequences of their behaviour and identifying their future sexual health goals and encouraging them to identify solutions to the problems they perceive in realising these goals.

Is it possible to implement such an intervention in the UK?

We consulted experts who work in sexual health in the UK. Overall, they thought that the intervention we developed was acceptable and that it could help them. Although the findings of the report are very useful, they are based on rather old studies that were conducted outside the UK. We believe that UK research is needed to make sure that behaviour change interventions are as effective and relevant as they can be.

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