

Sexual risk reduction interventions for patients attending sexual health clinics: a mixed-methods feasibility study

Carina King,¹ Carrie Llewellyn,^{2†}
Maryam Shahmanesh,^{1†} Charles Abraham,³
Julia Bailey,⁴ Fiona Burns,¹ Laura Clark,⁵
Andrew Copas,^{1,6} Alison Howarth,¹ Gwenda Hughes,⁷
Cath Mercer,¹ Alec Miners,⁸ Alex Pollard,²
Daniel Richardson,⁵ Alison Rodger,¹ Anupama Roy²
and Richard Gilson^{1*}

¹Institute for Global Health, University College London, London, UK

²Department of Primary Care and Public Health, Brighton and Sussex Medical School, Brighton, UK

³Medical School, University of Exeter, Exeter, UK

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

⁵Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust, Brighton, UK

⁶London Hub for Trials Methodology Research, Medical Research Council Clinical Trials Unit, London, UK

⁷Sexually Transmitted Infection Surveillance, Public Health England, London, UK

⁸Department of Health Services Research and Policy, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, London, UK

*Corresponding author r.gilson@ucl.ac.uk

†Carrie Llewellyn and Maryam Shahmanesh contributed equally to the work

Declared competing interests of authors: Fiona Burns reports personal fees from Gilead Sciences Europe Ltd outside the submitted work. Maryam Shahmanesh reports grants from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the Medical Research Council and from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council outside the submitted work.

Published March 2019

DOI: 10.3310/hta23120

Plain English summary

Sexual risk reduction interventions

Health Technology Assessment 2019; Vol. 23: No. 12

DOI: 10.3310/hta23120

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

Plain English summary

Reducing sexually transmitted infections (STIs) is a public health priority. Those most likely to be diagnosed with a STI are young people (aged 16–25 years) and men who have sex with men. Studies in other countries have shown that interventions aimed at changing sexual behaviour (e.g. increasing condom use) can reduce the chance of getting new STIs in patients attending sexual health (SH) clinics. However, it is not clear if these interventions will work in English sexual health clinics, or if they could be implemented within existing resources. This study aimed to find out if effective interventions could be adapted to an English setting and tested this in a randomised trial.

The scientific literature was searched for potential interventions and 33 trials were found. Effective methods included videos, digital web-based interventions, self-testing kits and talking sessions (e.g. counselling). Patients and providers were asked which interventions were acceptable and preferences for digital and one-to-one talking interventions were found. Providers suggested that these were feasible to deliver. Data routinely collected from patients (e.g. number of partners) were used to select patients at a higher risk of having a STI, a computerised risk score calculation was developed, and the highest risk group was directed to a one-to-one counselling intervention. There were no appropriate digital interventions available; therefore, a stand-in web page was created to signpost users to appropriate SH resources. This was offered to all patients.

The intervention package was piloted in two SH settings rather than the planned four because of a lack of clinic staff time and space. It was planned to follow up a subset of patients from all eight clinics 6 weeks after their visit to collect information on STI diagnoses. Patients were recruited from six clinics, but only 16% of patients completed the survey and returned a sample.

It was not possible to conclude definitively whether or not a randomised trial is feasible because of challenges in implementation and recruitment.

ISSN 1366-5278 (Print)

ISSN 2046-4924 (Online)

Impact factor: 4.513

Health Technology Assessment is indexed in MEDLINE, CINAHL, EMBASE, The Cochrane Library and the Clarivate Analytics Science Citation Index.

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

Editorial contact: journals.library@nhr.ac.uk

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

Criteria for inclusion in the *Health Technology Assessment* journal

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

Reviews in *Health Technology Assessment* 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.

HTA programme

The HTA programme, part of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), was set up in 1993. It produces high-quality research information on the effectiveness, costs and broader impact of health technologies for those who use, manage and provide care in the NHS. 'Health technologies' are broadly defined as all interventions used to promote health, prevent and treat disease, and improve rehabilitation and long-term care.

The journal is indexed in NHS Evidence via its abstracts included in MEDLINE and its Technology Assessment Reports inform National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance. HTA research is also an important source of evidence for National Screening Committee (NSC) policy decisions.

For more information about the HTA programme please visit the website: <http://www.nets.nhr.ac.uk/programmes/hta>

This report

The research reported in this issue of the journal was funded by the HTA programme as project number 12/191/05. The contractual start date was in September 2014. The draft report began editorial review in November 2017 and was accepted for publication in April 2018. The authors have been wholly responsible for all data collection, analysis and interpretation, and for writing up their work. The HTA editors and publisher have tried to ensure the accuracy of the authors' report and would like to thank the reviewers for their constructive comments on the draft 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 HTA programme or the Department of Health and Social Care. 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 HTA programme or the Department of Health and Social Care.

© Queen's Printer and Controller of HMSO 2019. This work was produced by King *et al.* under the terms of a commissioning contract issued by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. 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.nhr.ac.uk), produced by Prepress Projects Ltd, Perth, Scotland (www.prepress-projects.co.uk).

NIHR Journals Library Editor-in-Chief

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

NIHR Journals Library Editors

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

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

Professor Matthias Beck Professor of Management, Cork University Business School, Department of Management and Marketing, University College Cork, Ireland

Dr Tessa Crilly Director, Crystal Blue Consulting Ltd, UK

Dr Eugenia Cronin Senior Scientific Advisor, Wessex Institute, UK

Dr Peter Davidson Consultant Advisor, Wessex Institute, University of Southampton, UK

Ms Tara Lamont Scientific Advisor, NETSCC, UK

Dr Catriona McDaid Senior Research Fellow, York Trials Unit, Department of Health Sciences, University of York, UK

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

Professor Geoffrey Meads Professor of Wellbeing Research, 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 Great Ormond Street 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 Warwick Clinical Trials Unit, Warwick Medical School, University of Warwick, UK

Please visit the website for a list of editors: www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/about/editors

Editorial contact: journals.library@nihr.ac.uk