

A bespoke smoking cessation service compared with treatment as usual for people with severe mental ill health: the SCIMITAR+ RCT

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Plain English summary

The SCIMITAR+ RCT

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Plain English summary

Smoking is an important health issue, especially among people who have experienced mental ill health such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. This is because people with severe mental ill health (SMI) are more likely to smoke than the general population. Despite this, they are less likely to get help to stop smoking, and it may be that people with mental ill health problems need greater support to help them stop smoking.

To address this problem, we developed and tested a 'bespoke smoking cessation' (BSC) service tailored to people with SMI. People aged ≥ 18 years who said that they would like to stop smoking were randomly allocated to either a BSC service or the usual stop smoking services. Those in the BSC service were allocated a mental health professional who had been trained to deliver smoking cessation interventions. The mental health professional worked with the participant and their care team to advise on stop smoking medication and provide information, support and motivation. Usual-care participants were signposted to local smoking services, but their subsequent care was not directly provided or supervised by trial smoking cessation advisors.

Between October 2015 and December 2016, 526 people with SMI were recruited into the study: 265 of these people were randomly assigned to the BSC service and 261 were randomly assigned to usual care. At 6 and 12 months after randomisation, participants completed questionnaires that asked about their smoking status and health. Participants had their smoking status tested by measuring the amount of carbon monoxide in their breath.

After 6 months, more people who received the BSC intervention had stopped smoking than those who had received usual care. At 12 months, the results were less clear in terms of the difference in the number of people who had stopped smoking.

The BSC service cost less than or similar to usual care, when considering the overall health-care services. The improvement in health of people who received the BSC service remains uncertain. In addition, we do not know whether or not this was related to people stopping smoking.

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This report

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