Preoperative behavioural intervention to reduce drinking before elective orthopaedic surgery: the PRE-OP BIRDS feasibility RCT

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Disclaimer: This report contains transcripts of interviews conducted in the course of the research and contains language that may offend some readers.

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Plain English summary

The PRE-OP BIRDS feasibility RCT

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Plain English summary

Most patients undergoing knee and hip replacements are over 65 years old. Older patients have an increased risk of complications following surgery.

Heavy alcohol consumption in the weeks before surgery increases the risk of complications after surgery, which can extend recovery times. Advice that helps patients reduce their alcohol consumption before surgery may have benefits for recovery.

The PRE-OP BIRDS study had two parts: a feasibility study followed by a pilot randomised controlled trial with focus groups and an electronic survey used to characterise usual care in the preoperative assessment clinic.

The feasibility study took place at one hospital. It aimed to develop materials that help health-care professionals provide brief advice to patients on how to reduce alcohol consumption before surgery. This brief advice was delivered to eligible patients and the acceptability to staff and patients was assessed in interviews.

The pilot trial took place in three hospitals. Patients who agreed to take part were placed, by equal chance, into either a group that received usual care or a group that received usual care plus brief advice about reducing alcohol use. The aim was to count how many people agreed to take part and how many also agreed to complete a follow-up 6 months later. Interviews were carried out with patients and staff to explore their views on the intervention and the trial as a whole.

All of this information was collected to help decide if a future larger trial was possible. This work found that the tools used were acceptable to both patients and staff. Although the number of people who agreed to take part was smaller than hoped, almost all of those who took part also completed the 6-month follow-up. Therefore, a future larger trial was found to be possible, but some changes could be made to encourage more people to take part.

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This report

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