

Modelling tool to support decision-making in the NHS Health Check programme: workshops, systematic review and co-production with users

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Plain English summary

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Plain English summary

The NHS Health Check programme is available for adults aged 40–74 years in England to find the early risk of heart disease, cancers, lung disease and dementia, and lower that risk. However, some studies have suggested that the current scheme could perhaps be improved.

We systematically looked at previous studies to understand what makes a screening programme successful. We also contacted local authorities with the best NHS Health Check programmes to find out how they were being delivered so well. The most successful local authorities highlighted a wide variety of methods for achieving success. All had concrete plans in place for delivery, including different approaches for encouraging more adults to participate.

We further developed our existing computer model into a web-based tool [workHORSE (working Health Outcomes Research Simulation Environment)]. This tool can help those responsible for commissioning NHS Health Checks to further improve the delivery of their local programme. We held four workshops with relevant professionals to develop the workHORSE model. These workshops resulted in a useful 'real-world' tool for local commissioners: a tool that can calculate the current and potential future benefits of different programmes.

We used the model to show how commissioners can explore and compare a variety of different programmes. We found that combining several improvements can be useful. However, this provides modest benefits in improving health and value for money. At the same time, the impact on reducing inequalities is less clear and depends on the interventions used.

Our results suggest that:

1. a variety of successful approaches can be used to help increase the uptake of screening programmes such as NHS Health Checks
2. jointly developing a computer model with end-users leads to a more user-friendly and relevant model to improve the programme
3. the stage is now set for further work to identify the best approach in each local area.

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This report

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