

Feasibility of a theory-based intervention to reduce sedentary behaviour among contact centre staff: the SUH stepped-wedge cluster RCT

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Plain English summary

The SUH stepped-wedge cluster RCT

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Plain English summary

Sitting time is linked to an increased risk of a variety of physical and mental health conditions. Staff in contact centres tend to have high levels of sitting time.

The Stand Up for Health programme aimed to address a range of factors that cause prolonged sitting. As part of the programme, researchers worked with contact centres to increase their understanding of sitting behaviour in the workplace and to develop activities to support and motivate staff to sit less and move more. Researchers hosted two workshops with staff, which included brainstorming activities, developing an action plan and getting programme feedback from staff. Activities ranged from standing desks to individual and group initiatives, and changes to workplace policies and procedures.

This study aimed to see if Stand Up for Health was well received and feasible to deliver, and to understand the effectiveness of Stand Up for Health.

The study design allowed the programme to be delivered to different contact centres at different time points over 15 months. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person programme delivery and data collection could not be completed. However, the team remotely collected data and delivered activities from June 2020 to September 2020. To understand whether or not Stand Up for Health worked, the researchers collected data on sitting time and musculoskeletal health, and also asked the staff about their likes and dislikes relating to the programme.

Although Stand Up for Health was well received (acceptable) and feasible to deliver, it did not demonstrate any noticeable changes in reducing sitting time or other outcomes. This could be due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this, Stand Up for Health was successful in helping some contact centres plan for sustained activities. The study fostered a sense of ownership among staff, and increased knowledge and awareness about sedentary behaviour and physical activity. Future research should focus on developing a better understanding of means of reducing sitting time while home working and conducting further feasibility work to understand programme effectiveness.

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