



Synopsis

Stepping into day treatment approach versus inpatient treatment for adults with anorexia nervosa: the DAISIES RCT

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Plain language summary

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International treatment guidelines recommend inpatient and/or day-patient treatment for the treatment of adults with severe anorexia nervosa. However, the relative merits of these two intensive treatment options are unknown. The DAISIES trial was the first large-scale clinical trial designed to compare clinical and cost-effectiveness outcomes of inpatient and day-patient approaches for adults with severe anorexia nervosa. The trial was stopped early after 16 months as only 15 people agreed to take part. This paper summarises the work conducted for the trial, both when the trial was running and after it was closed. To understand why the trial failed, we talked to patients, carers, clinicians and researchers. Given the low number of participants, we could not answer most of the original questions of the trial, yet valuable information was obtained, especially regarding patients' treatment experiences. While participants in both trial arms had a similar increase in body weight over 12 months, they consistently viewed day-patient as more acceptable than inpatient treatment. When we talked to clinicians, patients and carers they all said that they valued several aspects of intensive treatment (e.g. a team approach) and disliked others (e.g. perceived over-focus on eating and weight gain). Ultimately, three groups of factors (related to patient preferences, service pressures and system-wide issues) contributed to the failure of the trial, all within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Alternative study designs may improve patients' willingness to take part in studies aiming to demonstrate clinical and cost-effectiveness of intensive treatments for severe anorexia nervosa (e.g. by incorporating patient preferences or by studying more community-based intensive treatment options, such as home treatment or intensive outpatient treatments).

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