Enhanced invitation methods and uptake of health checks in primary care: randomised controlled trial and cohort study using electronic health records

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Citation

Authors' objectives
A national programme of health checks to identify risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD) is being rolled out but is encountering difficulties because of low uptake. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of an enhanced invitation method using the question–behaviour effect (QBE), with or without the offer of a financial incentive to return the QBE questionnaire, at increasing the uptake of health checks. The research went on to evaluate the reasons for the low uptake of invitations and compare the case mix for invited and opportunistic health checks.

Authors' conclusions
Uptake of a health check following an invitation letter is low and is not increased through an enhanced invitation method using the QBE. The offer of a £5 incentive did not increase the rate of return of the QBE questionnaire. A high proportion of all health checks are performed opportunistically and not in response to a standard invitation letter. Participants receiving opportunistic checks are at higher risk of CVD than those responding to standard invitations. Future research should aim to increase the accessibility of preventative medical interventions to increase uptake. Research should also explore the wider use of electronic health records in delivering efficient trials.

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