

SWAT 21: Provision of incentives to improve participant response to data collection in a randomised trial of a public health intervention

Objective of this SWAT

To evaluate the effects of a retail voucher or entry into a lottery for an electronic tablet device on response rates during a prospective study.

Study area: Retention, Follow-up, Outcomes

Sample type: Participants

Estimated funding level needed: Low

Background

Retention of participants can be a particular challenge in public health trials. A Cochrane Methodology Review has reported that monetary incentives, and the offer of monetary incentives, almost doubled the odds on postal questionnaire response. It was reported that the odds of response in electronic surveys increased by one third where a lottery was implemented (1). Therefore, a potential solution to trial retention problems is the provision of a small monetary incentive or entry into a lottery upon completion of data collection. This will be evaluated in a cluster randomised trial of a physical activity loyalty scheme in Northern Ireland (ISRCTN17975376).

Interventions and comparators

Intervention 1: A small retail voucher upon completion of baseline, 6, 12 and 18-month data collection time points.

Intervention 2: Entry into a lottery to win an electronic tablet device upon completion of baseline, 6, 12 and 18-month data collection time points.

Index Type: Incentive

Method for allocating to intervention or comparator

Randomisation. In keeping with the design of the trial in which this is being tested, the randomisation is at the cluster level.

Outcome measures

Primary: Number and proportion of participants who complete baseline, 6, 12 and 18-month data collection time points.

Secondary:

Analysis plans

Comparative analyses of response rates for baseline, 6, 12 and 18-month data collection, with appropriate correction for any clustering effect.

Possible problems in implementing this SWAT

The incentives are being compared in a cluster randomised trials to try to avoid participants becoming aware that they are being offered different incentives.

References

1. Edwards PJ, Roberts I, Clarke MJ, Diguseppi C, Wentz R, Kwan I, Cooper R, Felix LM, Pratap S. Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2008; (3): MR000008.

Publications or presentations of this SWAT design

Examples of the implementation of this SWAT

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