

SWAT 16: Providing information on end-of-study compensation to improve participation in research

Objective of this SWAT

To evaluate the effects on recruitment of informing potential participants that they will receive compensation if they complete the study.

Study area: Recruitment; Retention.

Sample type: Participants.

Estimated funding level needed: Medium (depend on the size of the compensation).

Background

Recruitment for scientific studies can be challenging.[1] One potential solution to aid recruitment is to offer a monetary incentive to boost recruitment. A version of this SWAT has been implemented in the MOSAICC study which is an observational cohort study on the aetiology of myeloproliferative neoplasms, in which the compensation was a £10 cheque.

Interventions and comparators

Intervention 1: Potential participants are told before recruitment that they will receive compensation if they join and complete the study.

Intervention 2: Potential participants are not given any information on compensation.

Index Type: Incentive

Method for allocating to intervention or comparator

Randomisation.

Outcome measures

Primary outcomes: Number and proportion of potential participants who are recruited.

Secondary outcomes: Number and proportion of recruited participants who complete the study.

Analysis plans

Comparative analyses of people in the randomised groups and analyses of the study elements that are completed.

Possible problems in implementing this SWAT

That potential participants will have such strong feelings about joining the study that the incentive will not have any effect on them. The ethical and consent challenges of not informing a subset of the participants about the compensation or about the SWAT.

References

1. Treweek S, Mitchell E, Pitkethly M, Cook J, Kjeldstrøm M, Johansen M, Taskila TK, Sullivan F, Wilson S, Jackson C, Jones R, Lockhart P. Strategies to improve recruitment to randomised controlled trials. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 2010; (4): MR000013.

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Date of idea: 1 January 2012.