Brief Research Report

Recruiting Pregnant Smokers to a UK Clinical Randomised Control Trial: A Report on the Facilitators and Barriers

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Despite pregnant smokers wanting to stop smoking, many studies have shown that recruiting pregnant women into smoking cessation clinical trials is difficult and challenging. Therefore, better methods of recruitment need to be implemented to overcome these difficulties. This report demonstrates in practice what appropriate methods were used to recruit pregnant smokers to a UK clinical randomised control trial. Methods included: (1) targeting community midwives and antenatal clinics; (2) Attending midwifery meetings; (3) Distributing questionnaires to ultrasound units; (4) Cold calling and text messaging using information from maternity databases; and (5) Advertising using e.g. posters. The most successful referral strategy was from the community midwives. Pregnant smokers as participants are difficult to recruit as they may lead very complicated lives. Smoking while pregnant is very much a taboo and may be a reason for low recruitment and/or retainment. A continuation of social and professional support to pregnant smokers is needed.

Keywords. Pregnant smokers, facilitators, barriers