

Challenges in disseminating review findings: a case study

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The objective of this poster is to describe an active dissemination strategy, the thinking behind it, and to discuss the challenges and our experiences.

We were originally commissioned by the National Cancer Research Network to conduct three related systematic reviews to investigate:

- Barriers to participation in cancer trials
 - Interventions to overcome barriers to participation in cancer trials
 - Whether the interventions identified in the second review could be effectively implemented on a large scale to the wider public
- Due to the lack of effective interventions identified in the second review we did not proceed to the third stage

The message and audience

The decision that it was not feasible to proceed with the third stage made us reassess the message/s for dissemination and the audience/s that should be targeted.

Neither of the completed reviews provided easy answers. However, we felt there were important messages coming from the reviews in relation to the implications for conducting trials and the implications for future research. These messages were felt to be relevant to three specific audiences. We therefore decided that, in addition to publishing the reports of the reviews, we would actively disseminate the key messages.

Barriers to participation in cancer trials

The review found that it was not possible to identify barriers in a clear, reliable and consistent way from the primary research.

Interventions to increase participation in cancer trials

The review concluded that there was no evidence that any of the interventions increased patient participation.

Tailoring the message

The summary report was written to highlight the key messages and direct readers to the full reports. A press release provided some 'bottom line' information and this was used for general awareness raising for all forms of media as well as charities and consumer groups.

Messages

Audiences

Tailor messages

General awareness raising: press release

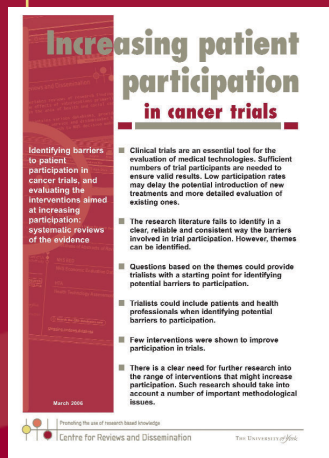
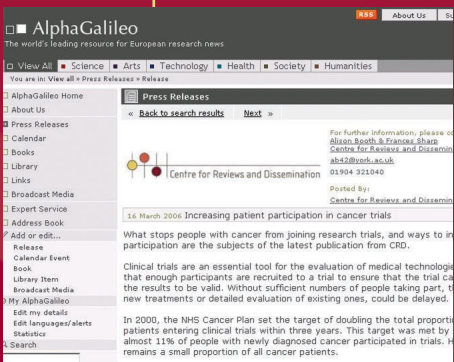
Tailored press release: specific message for Research Ethics Committees

Key messages: short report

Oral presentation

Peer-reviewed articles

Other articles: Scrip Supplement



Full Reports, available in print and electronically

Evaluation

It is difficult to assess the effectiveness of a dissemination strategy, particularly in terms of whether the findings and recommendations are read and assimilated by the target audience. In the absence of a full independent evaluation, measures of access to publications can be used to give an indication of awareness: 1837 copies of the summary report were sent out and 2728 emails of the press release were sent to journalists via AlphaGalileo. Within 7 months the full reports had been accessed 11,961 times.

Conclusions

The characteristics of the research message are important when developing a dissemination strategy and, through practical experience, we have found that an active approach is essential. General awareness raising by multiple routes ensures that the people who need to know the findings of research get to hear about it, as shown by the access to the full reports. It is therefore best to make the most of any opportunities to promote key messages.

Further information

All the reports can be downloaded free of charge from the CRD website at: www.york.ac.uk/inst/crd/crdpublications.htm

Opportunistic dissemination

While developing the dissemination strategy, news broke that six healthy volunteers taking part in phase 1 testing of TGN1412 had developed severe adverse reactions. Participation in medical research became a high interest topic in the media, amongst the public and in the research community. We brought forward our release date by 10 days.

Scrip World Pharmaceutical News contacted us to write a piece on the research findings for a special supplement on patient recruitment to trials. This required a turn-around within just a few days, however we recognised it as an important opportunity to reach a wider and very relevant audience than we had already achieved.