

CLAHRC BITE

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Helping people with psychosis to stop smoking and improve their health – A BITE-sized summary of NIHR CLAHRC South London research



Background

People who have a serious mental illness, such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, often have poor physical health, and die between 15 to 20 years earlier than the general population.

An international study ^[1], led by King's College London researchers at CLAHRC South London, of more than 3.2 million people with severe mental illness showed that they have an 85% higher chance of dying from cardiovascular disease than the general population.

In south London, research has shown that people with a serious mental illness are up to three times more likely to smoke than the general population. Research published by NICE has shown that 70% of people who have a diagnosis of schizophrenia are smokers.

While the negative effects of smoking on physical health are well known, the effects on mental health are only just beginning to be explored. A review indicated that stopping smoking was associated with a significant improvement in mental health. Smoking can also reduce the effectiveness of medication to treat mental illness.

Helping mental health trusts to go smoke free

Our psychosis team has worked with health professionals and managers at South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM) in their move to go smoke-free (October 2014) in line with NICE guidance.

'The majority of these premature deaths may be preventable with care that prioritises lifestyle changes, such as exercise, better nutrition and stopping smoking'

Dr Brendon Stubbs, a researcher in CLAHRC South London's psychosis theme

the electronic patient healthcare record to improve the provision of very brief advice (VBA) for smoking cessation. This means recording whether or not people smoke, giving advice to quit and referring to a specialist stop-smoking service.

They have worked with SLaM to provide an e-learning training module about smoking cessation for staff working with people who have experienced psychosis. This module is now being used by five other NHS Trusts.

In addition, they worked with SLaM and colleagues in the Maudsley NIHR Biomedical Research Centre, to enhance

Addressing the barriers to implementing smoke-free policies

One of the barriers to implementing smoke-free policies in mental health care settings is the perception among staff that the policies will lead to a rise in physical violence. Working with SLaM, our researchers assessed the impact of the SLaM smoke-free policy on incidents of physical violence. They found that physical violence actually fell by:

- 39% overall after the policy was introduced
- 47% in patients toward staff and 15% towards patients^[2].

What next?

- We are evaluating data for smoking-related outcomes for 5,864 patients. We found that between 2011 and 2016 very brief advice (VBA) on stopping smoking increased from 56.1% to 83.7%. We are evaluating the impact of this advice on patient health.
- We are working with commissioners locally to support a reconfiguration of stop-smoking services.
- We are investigating whether being invited to a weekly walking group, as well as having coaching and a pedometer, can increase physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour of people who have experienced psychosis ('Walk this Way' pilot).
- We are writing guidance for the European Psychiatric Association on exercise for people with severe mental illness.

References:

^[1] Correll, C *et al* (2017). Prevalence, incidence and mortality from cardiovascular disease in patients with pooled and specific severe mental illness: a large-scale meta-analysis of 3,211,768 patients and 113,383,368 controls. *World Psychiatry*

^[2] Robson, D *et al* (2017). The effect of implementing a smoke-free policy on physical violence within a psychiatric inpatient setting. *Lancet Psychiatry*

For more information about CLAHRC South London,

visit: www.clahrc-southlondon.nihr.ac.uk

For more information about the psychosis theme's research visit:

www.clahrc-southlondon.nihr.ac.uk/psychosis

This is a summary of independent research carried out at the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care South London at King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. The views expressed are those of the author[s] and not necessarily those of the NHS, the NIHR or the Department of Health.