

A collaborative approach to research study recruitment in PLWH during the SARS CoV-2 pandemic



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Background

Since COVID there are fewer site investigator meetings for non-CTIMP studies to discuss recruitment barriers.

Additionally, literature highlights various research trials that have successfully recruited do not report their strategies, consequently impacting ability to learn from success¹.

The pandemic has had considerable impact on enrolment to clinical research, thus services have needed to reevaluate their approach.

Following the pandemic, patients report more likely to engage in research if offered remote² or combined visits.

Methods

We reviewed recruitment strategies at our clinic for two observational studies with large targets (SCAPE-HIV, Positive Voices).

SCAPE-HIV, a prospective study exploring immune responses of PLWH to SARS CoV2 infection and vaccination. Positive Voices, a cross-sectional questionnaire study. Minimum recruitment targets, 600 and 262 respectively.

SCAPE involves open-offer enrolment, Positive Voices from a defined pre-selected cohort.

Initial approaches identified people opportunistically at clinic visits, with research staff offering information. However, reaching our targets through COVID became challenging and a move to virtual appointments condensed our opportunities to approach.

To increase recruitment, engagement and training of NHS nursing and clinical staff was undertaken alongside remote patient contact.

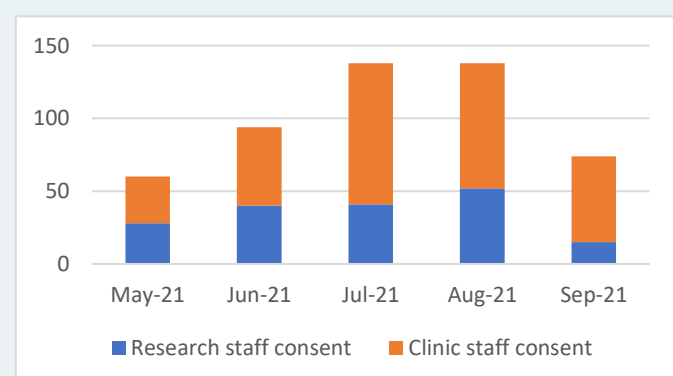
Results

After implementing collaborative methods, Positive Voices recruitment increased to 170 in July/August 2022 (73 in May/June). SCAPE recruitment also improved.

Hybrid nurse practitioners dedicating time to approach people during clinic visits and clinic staff involvement attributed to this rise, representing over half of consents.

The clinic team's substantial knowledge of our cohort, combined with their openness to research, leads to greater understanding of how likely individuals are to accept studies.

SCAPE recruitment



Conclusion

Positive Voices and SCAPE-HIV studies have been successful with recruitment due to a collaborative approach, resulting in our site being the highest current recruiting site involved in Positive Voices.

This approach has helped motivate the NHS team to become more involved and has become an exemplar for clinical trial delivery within our Trust.

Related literature

¹ Peckham, E., Arundel, C., Bailey, D., Callen, T., Cusack, C., Crosland, S., ... & Gilbody, S. (2018). Successful recruitment to trials: findings from the SCIMITAR+ trial. *Trials*, 19(1), 1-6.

¹ Mirza, M., Siebert, S., Pratt, A., Inch, E., McIntosh, F., Paton, J., ... & Falahee, M. (2021). Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on recruitment to clinical research studies in rheumatology. *Musculoskeletal care*.