

CLAHRC BITE

A bite-sized summary of a piece of research supported by CLAHRC for Birmingham and Black Country March 2012



Prevention of cardiovascular disease (CVD) in primary care

Background

- Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is a large cause of premature death in the UK. There are now effective drugs to prevent CVD and guidelines recommend their use. Patients do not always choose to accept preventative medication and GPs do not always offer it even when patients are at high risk of developing CVD.

The Study

- The purpose of this study was to identify and explore the attitudes of patients and GPs in Birmingham towards preventative medication for CVD after they had received detailed information about the benefits and risks of these drugs.
- We interviewed 13 GPs and 17 patients about their views and experiences and analysed the accounts given by GPs and patients to look for consistent themes that came through.

Turn over to find out more

Patient and general practitioner attitudes to taking medication to prevent cardiovascular disease after receiving detailed information on risks and benefits of treatment: a qualitative study

Findings

Many patients and GPs had significant concerns about taking preventative medication preferring to make lifestyle changes to reduce their risk. Despite these concerns, patients stated they would take medication if it was recommended by the doctor.

- Concerns were raised by both GPs and their patients about taking medication unnecessarily and the side effects of doing so; many preferred to consider lifestyle changes first.
- 'Risk' is a difficult concept to communicate and some patients misunderstood the distinction between curative and preventative medication. Whether they understood the risk information or not, patients almost always said they would trust their doctor's recommendation. This contrasted with their scepticism of the role of pharmaceutical companies and academics. GPs were also often sceptical about guidelines, but many recommended treatment for their patients nonetheless.

A guideline approach to preventative medication could be in conflict with the preferences of the patient

References

Gale, N., Greenfield, S. and Gill, P. et al. (2011) Patient and general practitioner attitudes to taking medication to prevent cardiovascular disease after receiving detailed information on risks and benefits of treatment: a qualitative study. **BMC Family Practice**. 12:59

<http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2296/12/59>



Recommendations for practice

“GPs must take extra care to explain what preventative medication is for and why it is recommended for people at high risk of CVD.

Recommendations should be made taking into account patient preferences. This may help improve adherence to medication in the long-term.”

What is CLAHRC for Birmingham & Black Country?

The Collaborations for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care (CLAHRC) is a partnership between the University of Birmingham and a number of NHS organisations in Birmingham and Black Country. We are funded by the National Institute for Health Research with a mission to undertake high-quality applied health research focused on the needs of patients to improve health services locally and beyond.

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www.clahrc-bbc.nihr.ac.uk

The research was part funded by the UK Medical Research Council and National Institute for Health Research. The views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of the NIHR, Department of Health, or the MRC.