

Title: Healthy Living Diabetes - Long-term Independent National Evaluation (HED-LINE)

Plain English summary of research (450 words)

Background

Type 2 diabetes is a common health condition that can cause further health issues and reduce people's quality of life. Treatment is essential, but it costs a lot of money. If people with type 2 diabetes take medication as and when recommended and make some sensible changes to their lifestyle (e.g. stop smoking, take more exercise, lose weight), they can help reduce their personal risk of greater health issues.

There is evidence that Diabetes education courses can help people manage their type 2 diabetes and reduce the risk of further complications. However the take-up rate of the face-to-face courses has been very low. The NHS is introducing a new web-based service named 'Healthy Living', which they hope will be more accessible for those with work and family commitments. The new service will be offered throughout England. The people introducing Healthy Living need to know if it really will work and whether it is a good use of NHS resources. We have designed a research project which should help answer these questions.

Research plan

We will analyse information gained from Healthy Living, and general practice records, to see what kind of patients are invited onto the programme, and whether they complete the programme. We will match people referred and not referred to the programme and report on whether referred patients show improved outcomes, such as healthier levels of blood sugar and losing weight, compared to those who were not referred to the programme. We will also see if some patients have better outcomes than others and try to find out why.

We will interview NHS clinical staff and managers responsible for the Healthy Living programme throughout England. We will ask them how they set up the service and what things they think help or hinder the programme. We will analyse information gained from Healthy Living and interview patients to see how well the HeLP Diabetes programme is delivered to patients and check that they receive all of the self-management materials they need to succeed. We will suggest what might be improved. We will also look at whether the programme offers good value for money.

All this information will be reported back to the people running Healthy Living so they can make improvements as they go along. Our team has the necessary skills and experience to do this research as we have done similar work in the past on other national programmes.

The research should benefit patients by testing whether Healthy Living is (practically) effective, and by providing information to improve the service. People with experience of diabetes will play an important role in managing the research and helping us to identify the benefits to patients and the NHS.