



October 2019

Long-Term Engagement Randomized Trial for Smoking Cessation: Preliminary Results

Background

Ontario's cessation service providers typically engage smokers in one-time limited services. Follow-ups may be conducted by cessation service providers for evaluation and research purposes, but generally they do not offer additional cessation support (e.g., counselling or nicotine replacement therapy). Since many smokers take years to quit, long-term engagement based on the chronic care model has the potential to shorten smokers' cessation journeys. A few studies completed in other jurisdictions have suggested promising results.^{1,2,3}

Key Findings

- Over 65% of study respondents opened the monthly emails
- However, monthly emails did not increase quitting

As part of the Research on Advancing Cessation Treatment (REACT) study, OTRU conducted a 12-month randomized trial to assess the impact of a long-term engagement intervention on smoking and cessation outcomes among a sample of Ontario smokers. This update provides an overview of participants' engagement with the monthly emails and 12-month follow-up smoking outcomes.

Methods

A total of 1,621 smokers and recent quitters were recruited between September 2017 and March 2018 from 3 cessation interventions (Ottawa Model for Smoking Cessation, the STOP study, Smokers' Helpline) and OTRU's Smokers' Panel study. Participants were, on average, 49 years of age and primarily female (58%), White (88%), born in Canada (89%) and had some post-secondary education (61%). Following recruitment, participants were randomly assigned into the control group (n=808) or intervention group (n=813). Intervention group participants received 11 monthly emails with a mini-poll and links to cessation services, while the control group did not receive any emails. Twelve months following recruitment, all participants were sent an online follow-up survey to assess smoking and cessation outcomes (e.g., increased intention to quit,



quit attempts, referral to cessation services and long-term abstinence). Two-thirds of study participants completed the online follow-up survey (67% response rate; n=1,093). Monthly email engagement data was obtained from MailChimp. Descriptive statistics and repeated measures logistic regression analyses were conducted in SAS.

Results

Almost all intervention group participants remained subscribed to the monthly emails throughout the 11-month intervention period, most opened the monthly emails and also responded to the mini-poll asking about their current smoking. Fewer than 10% of participants clicked on the links to cessation services.

No differences were found between intervention group and control group participants in smoking status and relapse outcomes.

Discussion

Our study findings suggest that smokers remained engaged throughout the 12-month intervention period. However, this study did not find a significant association between long-term engagement and positive smoking outcomes. Further study should investigate different types of long-term engagement messages to improve long-term cessation outcomes.

Author: Jolene Dubray

References

¹ Hajek P, Stead LF, West R, Jarvis M. Relapse prevention interventions for smoking cessation. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 2009;(1):CD003999.

² Brandon TH, Meade CD, Herzog TA, et al. Efficacy and cost-effectiveness of a minimal intervention to prevent smoking relapse: dismantling the effects of content versus contact. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 2004;72(5):797-808.)

³ Ellerbeck EF, Mahnken JD, Cupertino AP, et al. Effect of varying levels of disease management of smoking cessation: a randomized trial. *Annals of Internal Medicine* 2009;150(7):437-46.