

HIPS/24/10 - Improving Access To Cancer Screening Among People With Severe Mental Illness (SMI): Development Of A Programme Theory For A Complex Intervention

Background: Cancer screening can save lives by detecting disease earlier when treatment is more effective and reduce healthcare spending. The challenge is that often cancer screening programmes fail to sufficiently engage the most marginalised, leading to persistent inequalities in access and uptake. People who have serious mental illness (SMI) are less likely to participate in cancer screening but are 2.5 times more likely to die from cancer than the general population.

Aims: This research aims to better understand how to improve access to cancer screening among middle-aged and older people with SMI.

Methods: Over 22-months the research will comprise a series of stages called work packages (WPs) that have been designed to maximise the involvement of all stakeholders. These include professional care staff in primary care (general practice), secondary care (mental health services) and third sector mental health care, experts by lived-SMI experience and their supporters and carers. Stakeholders will be involved in the development and the co-production of an intervention designed to improve the uptake of cancer screening in people with SMI.

Applications: Co-design will include potential end-point users throughout the development of the intervention to ensure that the proposed methods to enhance engagement in cancer screening are optimised and pathways to impact healthcare delivery are clear and transparent. We will develop a theory that clearly describes the intervention and how it is implemented in healthcare. We plan to conduct clinical trial research in the future to test the implementation and effectiveness of our intervention.