





### Survey: Methods to minimise missing data in randomised control trials

**Overview:** This short survey builds on knowledge gained from previous CTU surveys and will contribute towards a wider MRC MRP funded project aiming to identify which strategies and practices used to minimise missing data should be formally evaluated. We will ask about the general approach used within your CTU related to targeting of participants, site staff, and CTU processes in order to reduce missing data.

**Definition of missing data:** Missing data may arise within randomised control trials due to participant loss to follow up, participant withdrawal or the particular outcome was not measured for a participant or the measurement was not included in the analysis.

**Completion:** Please pass this survey onto the person/s within your CTU who have an overview of all your trials. It can be completed within the word document or in a printed paper format, depending on your preference.

Return to: <u>a.kearney@liv.ac.uk</u> by Friday 12<sup>th</sup> September.

Paper copies can be posted to: Anna Kearney, Clinical Trials Research Centre, University of Liverpool, Institute of Child Health, Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust, Liverpool, L12 2AP

Thank you!

1. What are your considerations when determining an approach to monitoring missing data?

### 2. Do you usually adjust your sample size calculation for missing outcome data at the design stage?

		Yes
		If Yes, What level do you generally use?
		Do you provide justification for the level used and if so what informs the level used?
		Νο
3.	What pr	ocesses does your CTU usually use to reduce missing data? (Tick all that apply)
		Remote data capture with real time flagging of missing data items sent to local research site
		Central data entry with real time flagging of missing data within the CTU
		Automated alerts to trial coordinator of upcoming follow up visits

- Use of PPI in trial design or to address missing data issues raised within a trial
- Use of PPI in trial design or to address missing data iss
- Other- Specify \_\_\_\_\_

# 4. What problems have you experienced in requesting data on the reason behind a participant's decision to withdraw from a study? (*Tick all that apply*)

- Gaining favourable ethical opinion to ask
- □ Willingness of site staff to ask
- No problems experienced
- Other- specify \_\_\_\_\_

#### 5. Which factors should be included when determining the following?(Tick all that apply)

	Screening	Recruitment	Retention for duration of trial	Resolution of data queries	Availability of primary outcome data	Other (Optional Comments)
Site performance						
Funders assessment of performance						
Per patient payments for sites						

# 6. Which methods/practices have you used to minimise patient attrition and missing data from retained patients (excluding practices associated with questionnaire design)?

A list of methods and practices used to minimise missing data has been compiled using Valerie Brueton's 2014 Cochrane Systematic review of missing data interventions and the results of two recent surveys distributed through the CTU network and the Trial Managers Network.

In the subsequent tables please identify which strategies <u>your CTU has used to minimise attrition or missing data</u> by ticking the shaded box in the first column. If your CTU has used any of the strategies for reasons not associated with missing data, please do not tick the box. For all strategies that you have used to address missing data please complete the subsequent columns: who the strategy is aimed at; how regularly the strategy is used; what it is used to address; if there were implementation problems; why it is/ was used; and whether you have evaluated the effectiveness. There is also space for optional comments if you wish to give additional information on the specifics of the strategy, its implementation or evaluation.

Within the table you will be asked to indicate if you are willing to provide an abstract for any formal or information evaluations of missing data strategies. Feedback from the recent Trial Managers survey suggested that more could be done to share practice and knowledge of successful and unsuccessful missing data interventions. Across CTUs there will be a wealth of knowledge as a result of nested RCT and before/ after comparisons which may not always be published. We would like to create a publically available, searchable website of study abstracts evaluating strategies as a reference point for CTUs.

To avoid delays in returning these survey results, we plan to contact you at a later date to collect short abstracts (approx. 300 words) for any completed or ongoing studies. If you are willing to supply an abstract please tick in the right hand grey box against the relevant strategy and provide a contact email when returning the questionnaire.

#### Please complete the tables on the following pages:

Strategies used by your CTU to minimise missing data		Aimed at? (Tick al that apply)		How regularly is it used?			add (Tic th	ed to Iress ? k all pat ply)	Problems with implementation? ( <i>Tick all that apply</i> ) None (X) Resources - finances & staff time (R)	Rea	ison f	or usi	ng?	ong pl eval (Ticl	mplet going anne uatio k all ti ipply)	or d ns? hat	Optional Comments Space for you to give additional information on the strategy or its application or evaluation. If completing a paper copy please use extra pages as required
<b>Instructions:</b> For each strategy <u>used by your CTU to</u> <u>minimise missing data</u> please tick the first column and then answer the questions in subsequent columns. NB. If your CTU has used any of the strategies for reasons not associated with missing data there is no need to tick the box or complete subsequent columns	Strategy used	Participants	Sites	Would not use again	Used occasionally	Used routinely	Patient attrition		Sites reluctant (S) Patients reluctant (P) Not practical in practice (N) Other (O) X R S P N O	Logic	Experience	Best practice	Other (add in comments)	Before/after comparison	Nested RCT	Willing to send abstract	
Communication Strategies																	
Trial website																	
Newsletters																	
Social Media e.g. twitter, facebook, blogs																	
Collecting multiple contact details for the patient e.g. home, work, mobile phone numbers																	
Taking contact details for a friend/family member																	
Free phone no. for updating contact details																	
Contacting patients between trial visits																	
Christmas and birthday cards																	
Communication of trial findings/ results																	
Other, Specify																	
Reminders																	
Telephone reminders																	
Postal reminders																	
Email reminders																	
SMS Text reminders																	
Other, Specify																	

Strategies used by your CTU to minimise missing
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Making participation convenient Flexibility in appointment times																	
Flexibility in appointment locations																	
Re-imbursement of participant expenses																	
Case management e.g. helping patients book/ attend appointments, access health info etc.																	
Crèche service																	
Transport to and from appointments																	
Other, Specify																	
Methods to enhance data collection																	
Patient diaries																	
Trial identity cards																	
Behavioural Motivation session/s for patients																	
Data collection scheduled with routine care																	
Patient data entry systems e.g. web data, mobile applications																	
Phone questionnaires																	
Contact GPs for missing data /trace patients																	
Use of routinely collected data- ONS/HES/ISD																	
Follow up through patient notes only																	
Only collecting primary outcome for patients who have missing primary and secondary outcome data																	
Other, Specify																	

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Money/gift voucher given to participants for completion																	
of a milestone e.g. clinic attendance /data return																	
Money/gift voucher given to participants regardless of																	
clinic attendance or data return																	
Prize draw limited to trial participants																	
Charity donation																	
Gift e.g. mug, pen, toy																	
National Lottery ticket or similar public draw																	
Trial certificate																	
Other, Specify																	
Working with clinical staff at sites																	
ONS flagging of trial participants																	
Site initiation training on missing data																	
Triggered site training on missing data																	
Staggered per patient payments to sites																	
Targeted recruitment of sites/ GPs																	
Investigator meetings face to face																	
Investigator teleconferences																	
Routine site visits by CTU staff																	
A timeline of participant visits to help sites remember																	
when visits occur and what data should be collected																	
Other, Specify																	

#### 7. Which questionnaire design/delivery features have you used to minimise missing data?

Please tick which strategies you have used to minimise missing data. <u>For all strategies that you have used</u> please complete the subsequent columns: how regularly the strategy is used; what it is used to address; any problems with implementation; reason for using; and any evaluations of the effectiveness of the strategy.

			regularly is it used?		add (Tic th	ed to Iress ? k all pat ply)	Probl implen (Tick all None (X) Resource staff time	Rea	son f	or usi	ng?	ong pl eval (Tic	mplet going anne uatio k all t apply)	or d ns? hat	Optional Comments Space for you to give additional information on the strategy or its application or evaluation. If completing a paper copy please use extra pages as required		
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Incentives Enhanced cover letter																	
Total Design method (cover letter, return envelope, postcard reminders and replacement questionnaire) <sup>*</sup>																	
Priority or recorded post																	
'Personal touch' e.g. handwritten envelope																	
Inclusion of prepaid envelope																	
Short questionnaire																	
Long but clear questionnaire																	
Medical questions first																	
Generic questions first																	
Questions about the health issue first e.g. mental health before alcohol consumption																	
Questionnaires sent <3 weeks after a visit																	
Questionnaires sent before clinic visit																	
Questionnaires completed in clinics																	
Minimising frequency of questionnaires																	
Other, Specify																	

\* Dillman, Don A. Mail and telephone surveys. Vol. 3. Wiley Interscience, 1978.