

POSTER PRESENTATION

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Gauging acceptability: the utility of a national attitudes survey toward a trial of pressure garment therapy for burns scar management

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Background

Trials may be difficult to conduct due to a lack of acceptability of the trial question. For example, trials of existing treatments that are established in routine clinical practice without robust supporting evidence might be undermined by a lack of acceptability or presumed difficulty in recruiting patients. The NIHR HTA commissioned a feasibility study of pressure garment therapy for burns scar management as it was thought a full-scale trial would be difficult to conduct.

Methods

Pegasus is the resulting commissioned mixed-methods feasibility study which consists of an external pilot trial with process evaluation. To gauge acceptability, in addition to the pilot, we conducted a national survey of attitudes towards a full-scale trial amongst the burns clinical community, supplemented by telephone interviews (n=15).

Findings

Staff in 27 of 29 (n=223) surveyed burns services responded. Although a majority (67%) were in favour of a trial, this headline figure hides a more complex picture, particularly, in relation to clinical equipoise around the trial question. This has clear implications for the conduct of a national trial. We were able to further explore these survey findings via the telephone interviews and with emerging observations from the pilot trial and process evaluation.

Discussion

We discuss the utility of conducting a national survey of attitudes in addition to a pilot trial amongst a smaller sample of burns services. We reflect on whether this approach may provide insights over and above those identified from a small scale feasibility pilot.

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