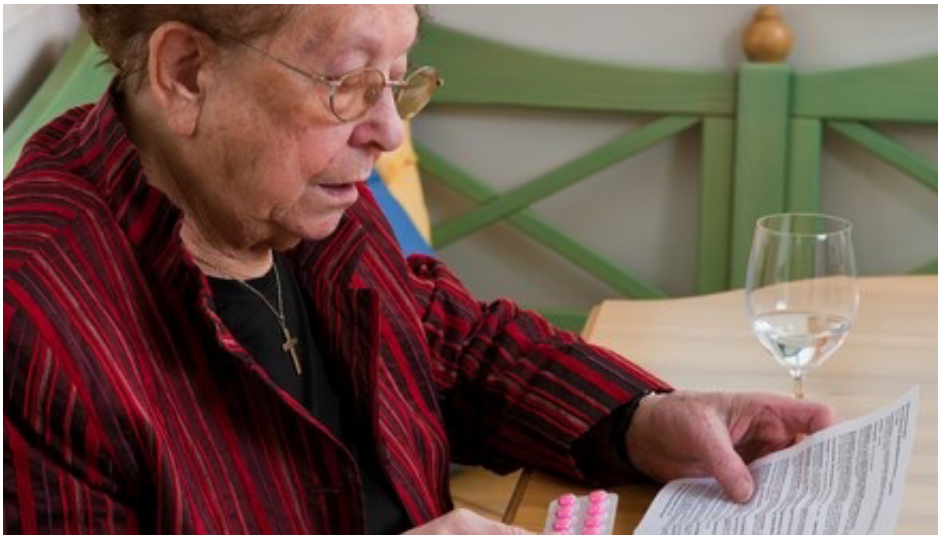


Making health information easier to understand

December 21 2015, by Euan Wemyss



How best to present research information about treatments to patients the public is being explored by researchers at the University of Aberdeen.

To carry out the study, researchers will make the biggest ever call for participants from NHS Scotland's register of health study volunteers - SHARE.

Information about treatments can often be confusing. The research team aims to present [information](#) in a variety of different ways to volunteers

to determine which is best understood and most helpful to [people](#) making decisions about treatments.

The team plans to ask every person on the SHARE register who has provided an email address – around 48,000 people – to take part in the study, which is part of a larger EU-funded project called DECIDE. The study will test something called a Summary of Findings table, which is a way of summarising research results. It will not ask participants about their own health but will show them different versions of the summaries for health problems such as ear infections and heart disease.

Professor Shaun Treweek from the University of Aberdeen's Health Services Research Unit coordinates DECIDE and leads much of DECIDE's work with the public.

He said: "We are asking thousands of people to take part. Which presentation people will be shown is selected at random, which is the best way to test whether something is better than an alternative. Participants' replies will help organisations such as the NHS improve the way they present information about treatments to the public."

Dr Andy Oxman from the Norwegian Knowledge Centre for the Health Services, Oslo, led the development of the presentations.

Dr Oxman said: "Most people prefer informed choices about treatments, rather than uninformed choices. This study will compare different ways of presenting information about the benefits and harms of treatments, so that people can make better informed healthcare choices."

The study has just started and will run over the internet. Almost everyone on the SHARE register will be eligible because the researchers are not looking for people with particular [health](#) conditions.

Provided by University of Aberdeen

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