

Patient volunteers needed for GP exercise referral study

August 30 2016, by Andrew Gould



Credit: University of Plymouth

Local patient volunteers are being sought by researchers investigating whether or not adding web-based coaching to a GP exercise referral scheme (ERS) would lead to increased uptake and sustained health

enhancing physical activity.

The study has been extended to February/March next year and researchers are looking for patients who can be referred by the GPs to the ERS at either the Life Centre or Brickfields leisure centres in Plymouth.

If you think you may be eligible for an ERS and would like more information about the study please email [e-coachersupport@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:coachersupport@plymouth.ac.uk) or call 07812 651805 or visit clahrc-peninsula.nihr.ac.uk/research/e-coacher.

The ERS an established method whereby doctors can 'prescribe' exercise to patients with medical conditions such as obesity, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, osteoarthritis or a history of depression or low mood. Evidence suggests that such exercise is beneficial, both physically and mentally, but that rates of uptake and ongoing engagement by patients may not be optimal.

Participants in the study will either receive ERS on its own, or with additional access to e-coachER, which is designed to help patients to access available support from the [exercise referral](#) scheme and build their own motivation. The e-coachER group will also receive technical support to ensure access to the internet and boost motivation and confidence to use the technology.

The primary objective will be for patients to achieve the public health target of 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical exercise every week by 12 months. The trial is investigating whether or not the addition of e-coachER results in more patients taking up exercise referral scheme and being physically active after 12 months. It is also seeking to determine what the costs and long-term [health](#) benefits and NHS savings may be.

The study is funded by the National Institute for Health Research (HTA).

Said Professor Adrian Taylor, trial Chief Investigator and Professor in Health Services Research at Plymouth University Peninsula Schools of Medicine and Dentistry, who is also supported by the National Institute for Health Research Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care South West Peninsula (NIHR PenCLAHRC):

"We know that the exercise referral scheme is a valuable tool for patients for whom regular exercise would be beneficial, but the trick is to support patients to remain physically active to improve or maintain [long term health](#). We have extended the recruitment period so that more people in Plymouth can get involved, and add to the data from over 100 people we have received so far. We are keen that [patients](#) get involved by talking to us direct."

Provided by University of Plymouth

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