

SWAT 242: Does providing taxis or travel reimbursement increase study participation among underserved groups?

Objective of this SWAT

- 1) To explore whether offering taxis or travel reimbursement increases participation in a randomised trial among underserved groups, especially those from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds and minority ethnic groups.
- 2) To identify any logistical or financial challenges associated with providing these travel support options.

Additional SWAT Details

Primary Study Area: Recruitment & Retention

Secondary Study Area: EDI

Who does the SWAT intervention target: Patients; Participants

Estimated resources needed to conduct the SWAT: Low

Estimated cost of the SWAT (£): TBC

Findings from Implementation of this SWAT

Reference(s) to publications of these findings:

Primary Outcome Findings:

Cost:

Background

Transport to and from healthcare sites is a significant barrier to trial participation, particularly for individuals without access to personal vehicles or reliable public transport. Research has shown that transportation difficulties can deter participation, leading to the underrepresentation of certain groups in clinical trials (Gibaldi et al., 2019).

To address this issue, this Study Within a Trial (SWAT) will evaluate whether offering pre-arranged taxis or travel reimbursement removes transportation barriers and increases participation among individuals from low socioeconomic backgrounds. By covering travel costs and coordinating transport directly through study sites, this initiative aims to reduce financial and logistical burdens, ultimately improving accessibility and engagement in clinical research.

Host Trial Population: Adults

Host Trial Condition Area: Gastrointestinal

Interventions and Comparators

Intervention 1: A door-to-door taxi service. The research team will arrange a pre-paid taxi through the Trust's preferred transport provider. The taxi will pick up the participant from their chosen location and drop them off at the hospital, then return them home after their appointment.

Intervention 2: Reimbursement of travel expenses. Participants who choose to arrange their own transport will be eligible to claim up to £25 in travel expenses. Reimbursement will be processed through their hospital's existing procedures.

Method for Allocating to Intervention or Comparator: -

Outcome Measures

Primary Outcomes: 1) Proportion of participants who opt for the taxi service versus travel reimbursement; 2) Association between participant characteristics and travel option selection; 3) Impact of travel support on recruitment rates, especially for participants from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds and minority ethnic groups.

Secondary Outcomes: Financial sustainability of providing pre-arranged taxis versus travel reimbursement.

Analysis Plans

Insights will be drawn from observed patterns rather than formal statistical analysis.

For the primary outcomes, the study team will review the data to: 1) Compare participation rates, particularly of socioeconomically disadvantaged people, between sites offering the taxi service and those outside the SWAT not offering taxis; 2) Examine patterns of travel option selection based on participant characteristics (e.g., socioeconomic status, ethnicity, location); 3) Assess whether providing study-funded transport is associated with improved recruitment and retention rates.

For the secondary outcome, the study team will review the data to identify any financial or logistical challenges in implementing these travel support options.

Possible Problems in Implementing This SWAT

While the SWAT will initially be limited to one site to help manage feasibility and cost, there are some logistical challenges to consider. If participants move or reschedule their appointments, site teams will need to communicate quickly and clearly with the taxi provider to ensure bookings are updated in time. Any delays could result in missed transport or additional charges. Practical issues at the hospital, such as limited parking or a lack of convenient drop off points, could also create difficulties, particularly for participants with mobility issues. Although costs are expected to be more manageable by running the SWAT at one site to begin with, taxi expenses may increase quickly, especially if appointments change frequently. Timely invoicing by sites will be important to help the Sponsor keep track of spending and avoid delays in monitoring overall cost and feasibility.

References Cited in This Outline

Gibaldi J, Whitham M, Kopil CM, Hastings T. Overcoming Transportation Barriers to Trial Participation. *Applied Clinical Trials* 2019;28(12):14-5.
<https://www.appliedclinicaltrialsonline.com/view/overcoming-transportation-barriers-trial-participation>

References to This SWAT

Source of This SWAT

People to show as the source of this idea: Shaun Treweek and Azar Alexander-Sefre

Contact email address: streweek@mac.com

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Revisions made by:

Date of revisions: