

Developing a theoretically-informed education programme within the context of a complex implementation strategy in UK primary care: an exemplar from the IMP²ART trial

Marsh V¹, McClatchey K¹, Liz Steed², Steve Holmes³, Stephanie JC Taylor², Sharon Wiener-Ogilvie⁴, Julia Neal⁵, Rhian Last⁶, Ann Saxon⁸, Hilary Pinnock¹

¹Asthma UK Centre for Applied Research, Usher Institute, The University of Edinburgh ²Institute for Population Health Sciences, Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry, Queen Mary University of London ³The Park Medical Practice, Shepton Mallet; Severn School of Primary Care, Health Education England (South West) ⁴Healthcare Improvement Scotland ⁵NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group ⁶Royal College of General Practitioners Yorkshire Faculty ⁷Education for Health, Warwick

Introduction

IMp2ART (Implementing IMProved Asthma self-management as RouTine) is a programme of work developing and evaluating a strategy for implementing supported asthma self-management in UK primary care. The strategy encompasses patient-facing resources, professional education, and organisational approaches to embed supported self-management. This paper reports the development of a theoretically-informed interprofessional education programme which aims to raise awareness of and enable healthcare professionals to deliver effective supported self-management.

Methods

Aligned with the Medical Research Council (MRC) Complex Intervention Framework, the multidisciplinary team developed educational content in three phases:

- 1) Developmental phase, identifying educational and behaviour change theory to guide development, in consultation with a professional advisory group
- 2) Feasibility pilot phase, testing the education using a 'think-aloud' method
- 3) Pre-pilot phase, delivering the education within the IMP²ART strategy.



Results

The developmental phase identified educational and behaviour change theory, and the need to provide two education modules:

- 1) a team module to raise awareness of supported asthma self-management for the whole team
- 2) an individual study module for those who conduct asthma reviews with patients.

The feasibility pilot highlighted content and design features in need of refinement, and the pre-pilot identified substantial changes to the delivery strategy for the education modules.

Discussion

A multi-stage development process, aligned with the MRC Framework, contributed to the module design and delivery. Prior explorative work, multi-disciplinary team discussions, and professional advisory group consultation, informed the initial development; and in-practice testing and pre-pilot stages enabled refinement. In our experience, there were important benefits of working together as an educationalist/researcher team. The education programme, a core component of the implementation strategy, is now being tested in the IMP²ART UK-wide cluster randomised controlled trial.

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