



**PENINSULA**  
— MEDICAL SCHOOL —  
UNIVERSITIES OF EXETER & PLYMOUTH



HTA Trial No. 08/53/15



**A study about your experience of  
getting care from a GP or Nurse**

**PATIENT INFORMATION**

**LEAFLET**

This leaflet contains an invitation to take part in the above study. It tells you why the study is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read it through carefully, so that you can decide whether or not you would like to take part.

### **THE RESEARCH STUDY**

Patients often ring their surgeries asking for same-day consultations. Not all such patients want or need to see a doctor or nurse face-to-face on each occasion. Some people, such as those who work during the day or have caring responsibilities, may find it easier to get prompt advice over the phone, rather than having to visit the practice in person. This system of assessing how best to meet patients' needs is called '**telephone triage**'.

Our study looks at how telephone triage systems led by doctors and nurses work. We are particularly interested in how these systems affect patients' experiences, safety and health, as well as practices' workloads and costs. Your surgery is one of 42 across the country that has kindly offered to help us with this study. Each of the 21,000 or so patients from these surgeries who are invited to participate will have asked for a same-day consultation.

This leaflet invites you to join the study. If you decide to take part, we would like you to fill in the short questionnaire enclosed with this leaflet. This will tell us how you got on with the system used by your surgery to manage same-day consultations.

This study is being carried out by a team of experienced researchers based in universities in Bristol, Exeter, Norwich and Warwick. We are available to answer your questions. You will find your local research teams' contact details at the end of this leaflet.

***Thank you for taking the time to read this leaflet***

## **What is the purpose of this study?**

This study looks at new ways to improve patients' access to services when they ask for same-day consultations. In particular, it aims to find out how well telephone triage systems led by doctors and nurses work. We are especially interested in any differences that these systems make to patients' experiences of care, safety and health, as well as to surgeries' workloads and costs.

Your surgery is taking part in this study. While the study is running, when you phone to ask for a same-day consultation, a doctor will phone you back. S/he will talk to you about your needs, to see if s/he can help you over the phone. If you and the doctor decide that you still need to come into the surgery, then s/he will make an appointment for you.

## **Who is taking part in this study?**

All adult patients or parents of children who have contacted their doctors' surgeries asking for same-day consultations with a doctor or nurse during the period of the study may be asked to take part.

## **What will happen to me if I decide to take part in this study?**

If you decide to take part in this study, we would like you to ***complete and return the brief questionnaire enclosed***. This shouldn't take more than about 15 minutes of your time. The questionnaire asks for your views on your surgery's same-day consultation service.

On the day of your consultation, a healthcare worker may have asked if you would give permission for one of our researchers to look at your medical records. The enclosed questionnaire asks the same question. If you originally said that that it would be OK for us to look at your records, but have now changed your mind, you can 'opt out'. Similarly, if you originally said 'no' to us seeing your records, and have now changed your mind, you can 'opt in'. If you let us look at your records, we will only collect information on the number and length of any visits that you made to primary care services (e.g. your surgery, A&E, a walk-in centre) within a month of making your same-day consultation request. Doing this will let us compare the effects of the different systems that we are studying.

The questionnaire allows you to say 'yes' or 'no' to having your records reviewed. **No sensitive information about your detailed medical history will be recorded, either way.**

## **Do I have to take part? Will my decision affect the services that I receive?**

We do hope that you will be willing to complete the enclosed questionnaire, but your decision about whether to take part in the study will in no way affect the services that you receive. It is entirely up to you whether or not you decide to take part in the study. You may also withdraw from the study at any time, without giving any reason.

## **What are the possible risks or disadvantages in taking part?**

As far as we know, there are no particular risks or disadvantages involved in taking part in this study. The surgeries taking part in the study have processes in place to ensure that

any problems that might arise from the triage systems being used are spotted early on and resolved.

### **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

Taking part in this study would allow you to have your say about your healthcare services, helping us to ensure that such services are provided in the best possible way. Your contribution could therefore help to improve things for other people at your surgery and/or using general practice services nationally.

### **Will the information I provide be kept confidential?**

Yes. All information about you will be handled in strict confidence in accordance with ethical and legal practice. Your decision to take part in the study will also be kept confidential. The only time that we would pass on information, for example to your doctor, would be if something in your questionnaire made us think that you, or someone else, was at risk of serious harm. Normally, we would only pass on information in this way after discussing the situation with you. Your medical records will only be reviewed by a study researcher if you give us permission to do so.

All personal information will be stored securely in line with the Data Protection Act (1998) for up to a year and then destroyed. Completed questionnaires will also be destroyed after 5 years.

### **What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?**

If you decide to take part in the study and then change your mind, you may stop taking part at any time without having to give a reason. If this should happen, general information collected up to that time, which does not identify you (such as your gender and age) might still be kept. This would let us see if patients who left the study differed in some way from those who stayed. It would be important to know this because, if the people who left and stayed were different, it might bias the study results. If you do decide to withdraw from the study then please call a member of the research team – our contact details are at toward the end of this booklet.

### **What if there's a problem?**

Any complaint about the way that you have been dealt with during this study will be promptly and thoroughly addressed. If you have any complaints or concerns about any aspect of the study itself or the research team's work, please feel free to discuss them with us. You will find our contact details at the end of this leaflet. If you have more general concerns about the way that you have been approached or treated during the study, you can access the NHS complaints mechanism via the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0800 073 0741. Calls made to this number are free. Alternatively, you can visit the PALS website at: <http://www.pals.nhs.uk/>

### **How will the results of the research study be used?**

The results of this study will interest many different people and organisations. We will share them with the surgeries involved and with other NHS bodies, to help them to

improve their services. We will also write them up for the study's funding body, for academic publications and conferences as well as for the general public. The results will also be available on the following website: <http://wdbdev.pcmd.ac.uk/esteem/>

**No individual patient will be identifiable in anything we write.**

**Who is organising/funding the study? Who has reviewed it?**

Our study is funded by the National Institute for Health Research Health Technology Assessment Programme <http://www.hta.ac.uk/>. The study has been reviewed, and its quality assured, by the Institute's team of scientific experts and the South West 2 NHS Research Ethics Committee (Ref. 09/H0202/53). The research is sponsored NHS Devon Primary Care Trust.

**Which organisations are carrying out the study?**

The study is being led by the Peninsula Medical School, based in Exeter, and carried out by research teams based in universities in Bristol, Exeter, Norwich and Warwick.

**Want to know more about the study or questionnaire?**

If you have any questions about this study, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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***Thank you for taking the time to read this information leaflet***



### **Still not sure whether to take part?**

For independent advice about taking part in research studies in general you can contact 'INVOLVE', an organisation that offers advice and information on patient/public research in the NHS, at:

Wessex House,  
Upper Market Street,  
Eastleigh,  
Hampshire,  
SO50 9FD

Telephone: 02380 651088  
Textphone: 02380 626239  
Fax: 02380 652 885

Email: [admin@invo.org.uk](mailto:admin@invo.org.uk)  
Website: <http://www.invo.org.uk/index.asp>

If you live in Devon, 'Folk-Us' offers similar advice & information at:

Room 407,  
Noy Scott House,  
Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital,  
Barrack Road,  
Exeter,  
Devon,  
EX2 5DW.

Telephone: 01392 403049  
Fax: 01392 406936

Email: [folk.us@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:folk.us@exeter.ac.uk)  
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