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P101 -Using initiatives to facilitate recruitment to exercise studies for patients with chronic kidney disease

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Background

It has been established that patients with Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) have reduced levels of physical activity, and studies report that engaging with exercise training can positively influence their physical activity levels. Studies that have an exercise intervention have reported difficulties with study recruitment and retention. With a large increase in exercise-based interventional studies in UK, a review of measures to facilitate recruitment of participants to this type of interventional study is necessary. In 2018, a randomised controlled clinical trial examining the feasibility of individualised exercise training to delay progression to end stage renal disease (The GFR-Exercise Feasibility Study) was funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and commenced at a London Renal Unit. Success of this study, due to complete in September 2020, rests on the successful recruitment of participants to the study within a 12-month recruitment window.

Methods

The total recruitment target for this trial is 90 participants, with 50 participants from the London renal unit. Patients will be identified from outpatient clinic list extracted from a Patient Administration System and eligible patients will be identified as per study inclusion and exclusion criteria with the use of an electronic database (Renalware). Participants will then be randomised to usual care or exercise training following the baseline assessment. Initiatives to facilitate recruitment include:

- Use of electronic database (PimS and Renalware)
- Adequate funding of research nurse time for screening and recruitment
- Ongoing communication with renal outpatient consultant and nurses
- Patient and renal staff education on benefits of exercise training
- Timely consenting process post informal patient discussion about the study
- Flexibility with appointments
- Incentives including food vouchers and travel reimbursement
- Utilisation of a senior research nurse with experience in delivery of exercise training for recruitment

Results

Starting November 2018, approximately 695 CKD patients have been screened for study eligibility and to date, a total of 46 patients have been found to be eligible for the study. 10 patients have been approached about the study so far and 2 have consented to take part. Three patients are still considering their decision to participate. Barriers to recruitment include patients missing their appointments, patients unable to commit to time requirements with exercise training due to work commitments, and competing studies. The necessity to attend a supervised exercise training class has also proved to be a limitation.

Conclusions

It is imperative that recruitment to interventional studies, especially those requiring a large time commitment, is carefully planned and that initiatives to facilitate recruitment are considered. Evaluating recruitment strategies early on in a study can also allow initiatives to facilitate recruitment to be revised, thus maximising recruitment success across the whole recruitment period.