

Exploring Retention in a Randomised Controlled Smoking Intervention Trial for
Psychiatric Inpatients

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PARTICIPANT RETENTION OF A SMOKING INTERVENTION

Declarations

Statement of Originality

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying subject to the provision of the Copyright Act 1968.

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PARTICIPANT RETENTION OF A SMOKING INTERVENTION

Table of Contents

Critical Literature Review.....	1
Smoking and Mental Illness.....	1
Importance of Comprehensively Reporting Outcomes of Clinical Trials, Including Retention Rate.....	4
Participant Retention: Rates and Associated Factors.....	7
Smokers from the General Population.....	7
Smokers with a Mental Illness.....	9
Overview of the ‘No Butts’ Project.....	13
Aims of the Current Study.....	14
References.....	15
Manuscript.....	27
Abstract.....	28
Introduction.....	29
Smoking and Mental Illness.....	29
Importance of Comprehensively Reporting Retention Rate.....	30
Participant Retention: Rates and Associated Factors.....	32
Aims of the Current Study.....	36
Method.....	37
Design.....	37
Setting and Participants.....	37
Procedure.....	38
Study Measures.....	39
Statistical Analysis.....	40

PARTICIPANT RETENTION OF A SMOKING INTERVENTION

Results.....	41
Participants.....	41
Table 1: <i>Comparison of Demographics at Study Baseline by Group Allocation</i>	42
Retention.....	42
Table 2: <i>Retention Status at All Three Follow-up Points by Group Allocation</i>	43
Relationship between Preceding Follow-ups with the Final Follow-up...	43
Table 3: <i>Odds of Retention at 12-months by Preceding Follow-up Points</i>	43
Factors Associated with Retention.....	44
Table 4: <i>Factors Associated with Retention Rate at 12-months</i>	45
Discussion.....	45
General Limitations.....	53
Conclusion.....	54
References.....	55
Appendices.....	66
Appendix A: American Psychological Association – Scope and Submission Guidelines.....	66
Appendix B: Notice of Ethical Approval.....	69
Appendix C: Information Statement.....	72
Appendix D: Consent Form.....	76

PARTICIPANT RETENTION OF A SMOKING INTERVENTION

Structured Abstract

Scope

Low participant retention rates represent a common challenge in smoking cessation trials and detract from the ultimate validity of study findings, yet there has been little previous research examining the factors associated with retention in such trials, and particularly so for smokers with a mental illness. The first section of this thesis presents a critical review of the importance of reporting retention rate, as well as the rates and associated factors in participant retention for smokers both from the general population and those with a mental illness. The critical review also includes an overview of a randomised controlled trial (RCT) titled the ‘No Butts’ Project. The second section of this thesis presents a manuscript detailing an original research study undertaken within the ‘No Butts’ Project, a brief description of which is outlined below.

Purpose

The present research aimed to report the retention rates achieved in the ‘No Butts’ trial that assessed the efficacy of integrating psychiatric inpatient and community based smoking cessation supports on abstinence rates at 1-, 6- and 12-month follow-ups for both the control and intervention group. The current study also aimed to examine the relationship between follow-up time and participant retention, using the ‘No Butts’ trial. The final aim of the study undertaken and reported on for this thesis was to explore the potential determinants (e.g., participants clinical, demographic and baseline characteristics of smoking) of completing the 12-month follow-up assessment in the “No Butts’ project.

PARTICIPANT RETENTION OF A SMOKING INTERVENTION

Methodology

The 740 participants, recruited across four mental health facilities in Australia, were randomly allocated to either a Control or Intervention group (Normal or Supported Care, respectively). Outcome data was sought from all participants, via computer assisted telephone interview, at 1-month, 6-months and 12-months post discharge. Descriptive statistics were used to report on retention rates for the Supported and Normal Care groups. Data was analysed using McNemar tests, logistic regressions, chi-square tests, and generalised estimating equations.

Results

Overall, retention rates at 1-month, 6-months and 12-months were 63%, 56% and 60% respectively, and did not differ significantly by treatment group. However specifically to males, more participants were retained at 1-month, than at 6-months and 12-months. In general, the odds of being retained at 12-months were higher for participants who had participated in preceding follow-ups. Retention was also greater for smokers who were older, did not identify as Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander, identified as weekly or irregular smokers at baseline and had a higher level of education.

Conclusions

The results of the present study contribute to the literature on participant retention in smoking cessation trials involving persons with a mental illness. It also provides clinically relevant information that could be applied to improve retention by identifying potential barriers to participant retention at long-term follow-up in a sample of smokers with mental illness.

Keywords: retention, smoking cessation, randomised controlled trial, mental illness