

October 2021



TACKLING CHRONIC DEPRESSION

The TACK researchers have been working hard in all the trial sites over the last few months to recruit as many clinicians and service users as possible before recruitment for the main trial ends. The target sample size for the trial was reduced based on consultation with the study statisticians. A request for a 12 month extension to the TACK Programme was submitted to the funder at the end of August 2021. The members of the LEAP met with the PIECEs project researchers from India and Pakistan in July 2021 to provide advice on facilitating service user involvement in research.

TACK RCT progress

The TACK study researchers across the 7 trial sites have been engaged in the last push to recruit clinicians and service users into the main trial. They have been also making efforts to improve the follow up rate of the 3, 6 and 12 month assessments. Recruitment activities have also been initiated in two newly added sites: Lancashire & South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust (LSCFT) and South London and Maudsley (SLaM) NHS Foundation Trust. After reviewing the figures achieved by the 30th September against the planned targets, the recruitment period has been extended to 26th November 2021.

We have also started recruiting and training clinicians who will test DIALOG+ for the “Training study” (Work Package 6). This small study aims to explore what kind of adjustments are needed to train clinicians from different mental health services & settings in DIALOG+, other than CMHTs. The participating clinicians will complete a post-training survey to evaluate the DIALOG+ training given and indicate what kind of additional support they may need. After testing the intervention for 3 months within their routine care meetings they will be invited to take part in individual interviews & focus groups to explore their experiences further and to adapt the standardised training package accordingly. So far we have trained 20 clinicians from Early Intervention Services from Kent and Medway NHS Trust, out of the target sample of 30.

TACK Extension Request

The TACK team submitted a request for a 12-month costed extension to the programme funder at end of August 2021, following consultation with all the sites and study co-applicants. The length of extension was agreed based on the latest recruitment projections. As a part of this process the target sample size for the trial was reduced from 448 to 376. This reduction was made possible based on the recently available findings from the TACK feasibility trial as opposed to the more conservative calculation that was originally used. The new figure was calculated by the statistical team at the Pragmatic Clinical Trials Unit at QMUL. This amendment as well as the request for the extension were endorsed by the TACK Programme Steering Committee (PSC) at the meeting held on the 25th August 2021.

International LEAP meeting

The meeting between the TACK LEAP members and the PIECEs project researchers was held on 22th July 2021. The LEAP members provided advice on initiating new PPI panels in India and Pakistan. They discussed potential barriers to service user participation in these countries and ways to overcome them. Both the LEAP members and researchers found the discussion helpful & uplifting. A further meeting will be arranged in 6 months' time when the PIECEs researchers will provide an update on what has been done in the meantime.

Other LEAP activities

Four members of the TACK LEAP who expressed interest in participating in analysis of the qualitative data collected for the feasibility trial were trained in thematic analysis by the TACK researchers on 25th June 2021. They have since been involved in coding the data and developing a coding frame for the transcripts. Interviews explored the experience of using DIALOG+ for 6 months as part of the feasibility trial. The findings will be published as a part of the planned paper early next year.

The 12th TACK LEAP meeting was held on 25th July 2021. The LEAP members were very complementary about the efforts of the TACK researchers and have since written an open letter to the researchers acknowledging their hard work and expressing gratitude for their achievements in difficult circumstances. The letter was circulated to all TACK researchers. The LEAP Chair Dr Sue Collinson also provided feedback on the meeting with the PIECEs project researchers. The members reflected on the meeting and how to develop this international collaboration further. It was agreed that the TACK researchers will look into potential funding for small Public and Patient Involvement projects.

Recruitment and Data Collection Update

370 service users and **221 clinicians** have been recruited into the study as of 30th September 2021. A total of **112 clusters** have been randomised so far (112 clinicians and 321 service users). The minimum cluster size was reduced from 2 to 1 in August 2021 so that we do not lose participants from the small clusters where it was not possible to recruit more eligible service users.

TACK recruitment period for the main trial has been extended until 26th November 2021 to allow researchers across the TACK sites to finalise recruitment of the identified clinicians and service users. In particular, 2 newly joined sites (LSCFT and SLaM) need some extra time to reach their targets.

As the overall TACK sample size has been reduced from 448 to 376, some of the sites have had their recruitment targets reduced accordingly based on the local assessments and projections. Predicted vs actual recruitment of service users into the main trial as of 30.Sep.2021 is presented in the graph below.

