

Background on the PRIMROSE study

The Primrose project is a large scale study led by researchers at University College London focusing on the higher risk of physical health problems, such as heart disease and stroke (cardiovascular disease) and diabetes among people with mental health problems. These physical health problems often go undetected and untreated, as people's mental health may sometimes be seen as a priority over the secondary concern of people's physical health.

In a cluster randomised controlled trial the study team tested the cost effectiveness of a practice-nurse or healthcare assistant led intervention to reduce cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk in people with severe mental illnesses (SMI) over a 12-month period.

76 GP practices were randomly allocated to the intervention or control group. 327 patients with severe mental illness, including people with schizophrenia and bipolar affective disorder, who were at increased risk of CVD received either:

- 1) A CVD risk reduction service for people with severe mental illnesses and CVD risk factors. The intervention involved practice nurses or healthcare assistants working with patients on a one to one basis to set and monitor progress with goals related to each individuals cardiovascular risk. This included prescribing and helping patients to monitor their use of statins and blood pressure tablets, improve their diet, increase physical activity, reduce or stop smoking or reduce alcohol intake
- 2) Standard care provided by the GP practice

In each GP practice, people aged 30-75 years old with SMI were invited to attend a CVD health check. The GP practices identified between 1 and 10 patients to work with and were randomly allocated to either receive training to deliver the intervention or to deliver usual care.

The findings from the randomized controlled trial will be presented in July 2017 and will be disseminated to stakeholder groups including academics and healthcare professionals.