

# Feasibility and acceptability of a 'buddy' physical activity intervention for postnatal women

Kate Ellis, Sally Pears, Stephen Sutton

University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

## Abstract

**Introduction:** Physical activity (PA) during the postnatal period is beneficial for physical and mental health, yet its prevalence is low in this population. Buddy Up is a PA intervention that pairs two new mothers as buddies who attend three PA counselling sessions (PACS) based on motivational interviewing principles, supplemented by a booklet. This study aims to assess the feasibility and acceptability of Buddy Up.

**Methods:** Participants were matched with a buddy by nominating an existing friend or by researchers. We calculated participant adherence rates to assess feasibility and post-intervention questionnaires and telephone interviews to assess acceptability.

**Results:** 44 participants (existing friends (n=22); new match (n=22)) were recruited and 21 eligible participants remained unmatched. 59/66 (89.4%) PACs were delivered (non-delivery; participant withdrawal (n=5); rescheduling difficulties (n=2)). Of these, 40/59 (67.8%) PACs were delivered as arranged and 19/59 (32.2%) were rearranged (illness (n=8); other commitments (n=10); other (n=1)). Participants participated in PA with their buddy on 0.97 days (SD=1.81) in the past week and provided support by sending encouraging messages (81.8%), sharing PA ideas/information (69.7%) and doing PA together (57.5%). Early findings from the post-intervention interviews suggest good acceptability of the PACs and supplementary booklet, minimal usage of the booklet and stark differences in acceptability of the buddy element among participants.

**Discussion:** A buddy-based face-to-face intervention with postnatal women is feasible, but requires a flexible approach due to the high number of rescheduled sessions. Further analysis of the post-intervention interviews will examine the differences in acceptability of the buddy element.

## Patient and Public Involvement (PPI)

PPI was used during the intervention development process, which has been presented at previous SPCR Events