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Bray, Emma; Hives, Lucy; Georgiou, Rachel; Benedetto, Valerio; Heyworth, Paul; Doherty, Patrick; Williams, Nefyn Howard; Rutter, Paul; Spencer, Joe; Clegg, Andrew; Watkins, Caroline L

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1 How feasible is self-monitoring for the management of 2 prehypertension? The REVERSE study

3 Bray EP, Hives L, Georgiou R, Benedetto V, Hayworth P, Doherty P, Williams N, Rutter P, Spencer J,
4 Clegg A, Watkins CL.

5 *Author details*

6 Dr Emma P Bray, PhD, MSc, BSc (Hons) CPsychol. Senior Research Fellow, Stroke Research Team,
7 School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Lancashire, Preston, PR1 2HE, UK. ORCID ID: 0000-
8 0001-9882-3539. EBray@lancashire.ac.uk

9 Ms Lucy Hives, MSc, BSc (Hons). Research Associate, School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of
10 Lancashire, Preston PR1 2HE, UK. ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4125-4034

11 Ms Rachel Georgiou, MSc, PGdip, BSc (Hons), RGN. Senior Research Fellow, Stroke Research Team,
12 School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Lancashire, Preston, PR1 2HE, UK. Orcid: 0000-0002-
13 0920-0602

14 Dr Valerio Benedetto, PhD, MSc, BSc. Research Fellow, Applied Health Research hub, University of
15 Lancashire, Preston PR1 2HE, UK; NIHR Applied Research Collaboration North West Coast, Liverpool
16 L69 3GL, UK. ORCID: 0000-0002-4683-0777

17 Mr Paul Hayworth, Patient representative, Lancashire, UK

18 Mr Patrick Doherty, Patient representative, UK

19 Prof Nefyn Williams, PhD, FRCGP. Professor in Primary Care, Department of Primary Care and Mental
20 Health, University of Liverpool, L69 3GL. ORCID ID: 0000-0002-8078-409X

21 Prof Paul Rutter, PhD. Professor of Pharmacy Practice, University of Portsmouth, PO1 2DT, UK.
22 ORCID ID: 000

23 Mr Joe Spencer, PGDip, BSc (Hons). Research Assistant, Clinical Trials Research Unit, University of
24 Sheffield, Sheffield, S10 2HQ, UK. ORCID ID: 0000-0003-3723-7629

25 Prof Andrew J Clegg, PhD, MSc, BA (Hons), Professor of Health Services Research, Applied Health
26 Research hub, University of Lancashire, Preston PR1 2HE; NIHR Applied Research Collaboration
27 North West Coast, Liverpool L69 3GL, UK. ORCID: 0000-0001-8938-7819

28 Prof Caroline Leigh Watkins, PhD, BA (Hons), RN. Professor of Stroke and Older People's Care, Stroke
29 Research Team, School of Nursing and Midwifery; Applied Health Research hub, University of
30 Lancashire, Preston, PR1 2HE, UK; NIHR Applied Research Collaboration North West Coast, Liverpool
31 L69 3GL, UK. ORCID ID: 0000-0002-9403-3772

32

33 **Abstract (250 words; currently 250)**

34 **Background**

35 Prehypertension (blood pressure (BP) 120–139/80–89 mmHg) affects 40% of UK adults increasing
36 cardiovascular risk. While BP self-monitoring is effective in hypertension, its feasibility in

1 prehypertension is unclear. Concerns include lack of interest, medicalisation and unintended
2 consequences, despite evidence suggesting it may empower individuals in risk management and
3 prevention.

4 **Aim:**

5 To determine the feasibility of BP self-monitoring for prehypertension.

6 **Design and Setting**

7 A prospective, non-randomised, mixed-methods, feasibility study across primary care in Lancashire
8 and South Cumbria.

9 **Method**

10 People with prehypertension were recruited from 5 general practices, 3 pharmacies and 1 BP-
11 checking provider. Participants received a BP monitor and training, then self-monitored BP on the
12 first three days of each month for six months. Participants submitted their results to the research
13 team. Outcome data was collected at baseline, 6-months and 12-months and analysed mainly using
14 descriptive statistics.

15

16 **Results**

17 Of 162 expressions of interest, 80 were eligible and consented; 78 from general practice, one each
18 from pharmacy and community providers. Of those recruited, 66 (83%) and 33 (41%) completed 6-
19 month and 12-month follow-up, respectively, with minimal missing data. No adverse effects were
20 reported. Illness perceptions significantly improved (Mean 26.6 (SD 8.6) to Mean 22.6 (SD 8.7),
21 $p=0.002$), with no other significant changes. There was only one non-white participant.

22 **Conclusion**

23 BP self-monitoring for prehypertension is feasible in general practice, but requires further
24 exploration with pharmacy, and community providers. The homogenous sample limits
25 generalisability highlighting the need for targeted outreach Findings need confirming in an
26 effectiveness trial.

27

28

29 **Keywords**

30 Prehypertension, Prevention, Self-Monitoring, Blood Pressure, Cardiovascular Disease, Primary Care

31

32 **How this fits in**

33 Blood pressure within the prehypertension thresholds increases risk of developing cardiovascular
34 disease and hypertension.

35 Blood pressure self-monitoring for the management of hypertension is well evidenced, and
36 established in clinical practice, but it is unclear whether it would be feasible for use in
37 prehypertension management.

1 This work shows that blood pressure self-monitoring for prehypertension is feasible in general
2 practice, with no reported negative unintended consequences.
3 Further collaboration with pharmacy and community providers is needed, and improved inclusion of
4 under-served groups would be needed in any future effectiveness trial.

5

6 **Introduction**

7 High blood pressure (BP) is a key modifiable risk factor for preventing cardiovascular disease¹⁻³
8 (CVD) and stroke.^{4,5} However, evidence now shows that BP below the traditional hypertensive
9 threshold (140/90 mmHg) also poses risk.^{5,6} Prehypertension (BP between 120-139/80-89 mmHg),
10 affects around 40% of UK adults,⁷ and although not classified as a disease, adults with
11 prehypertension, even without existing CVD, are at increased risk of developing hypertension and
12 CVD⁸⁻¹⁶ compared to those with normal BP (<120/80 mmHg) over relatively short follow-up period.^{8,}
13 ⁹ One study¹⁷ reported that CVD risk increased steadily from 115/75 mmHg, doubling with each
14 20/10 mmHg increment. Recent RCTs and meta-analyses indicate that lowering SBP to below
15 120mmHg, rather than 140 mmHg, reduces CV events, stroke and mortality, including in those with
16 no prior CVD.¹⁸⁻²²

17 Despite this, UK guidelines do not define or acknowledge prehypertension. NICE²³ recommends
18 remeasuring clinic BP at least every five years, and more frequently when readings are close to
19 140/90 mmHg usually relying on single opportunistic clinic measurements. These are known to be
20 inaccurate, and guidelines offers no details on follow-up, leaving a gap in how to monitor and
21 support people whose BP is below treatment thresholds but still associated with risk.

22 Taken together, these findings suggest that prehypertension offers an important window for
23 prevention. Non-pharmacological lifestyle interventions can reduce SBP by up to 10 mmHg, reverse
24 prehypertension, and delay or prevent progression to hypertension^{24, 25} While self-monitoring is
25 established in hypertension care,²⁶⁻³⁰ its feasibility and acceptability in prehypertension remains
26 uncertain. Concerns include anxiety,³¹ poorer self-rated health,³² and stigma,³³ alongside worries
27 about labelling and medicalising normal BP variation. However, awareness may be beneficial,^{34,35}
28 empowering individuals to take ownership of their health. A trial is needed to determine whether
29 self-monitoring can support awareness, detection, and management of prehypertension, and
30 whether it may help postpone hypertension and CVD. This feasibility study will explore the
31 acceptability and practicality of monitoring prehypertension at home, and inform the design of a
32 future multi-centre, randomised trial.

33

34 *Aims and objectives*

35 Determine the feasibility and acceptability of BP self-monitoring amongst people with BP in the
36 Prehypertension range, and healthcare professionals (HCPs)

37 This paper focuses on the feasibility, with main objectives to:

- 38 - Determine the willingness of people with prehypertension, and HCPs, to engage with BP self-
39 monitoring
- 40 - Determine the feasibility of recruitment and attrition of people with prehypertension and
41 healthcare providers
- 42 - Assess the feasibility of data collection and completeness

- 1 - Evaluate UNCs (depression, quality-of-life, health resource use)
- 2 - Explore changes in lifestyle and psychosocial factors

3

4 **Methods**

5 *Design and setting*

6 REVERSE was a prospective, non-randomised, mixed-methods, feasibility study based across primary
7 care in Lancashire and South Cumbria. The study is registered (ISRCTN13649483) and favourable
8 ethical opinion was received from London–Fulham NHS Research Ethics Committee (REF:
9 22/PR/0108) and the University of Lancashire Health Ethics Review Panel (HEALTH 0299).

10 *Study population*

11 People with prehypertension were identified from GP records or health checks/ BP checks
12 conducted in pharmacies or in the community.

13 *Eligibility criteria*

14 Inclusion criteria; aged 18+, BP between 120-139/80-89 mmHg, no previous hypertension diagnosis.

15 Exclusion criteria; prescribed BP lowering medication, pregnancy, actively BP self-monitoring and not
16 willing to follow study protocol, diagnosis of a life-limiting illness.

17 *Recruitment*

18 The North West Coast Primary Care Clinical Research Network (CRN), and Community Pharmacy
19 Lancashire advertised the study to practices and pharmacies through their usual channels. Although
20 there are approximately 210 GP practices and 360 community pharmacies across Lancashire and
21 South Cumbria, the invitation process was likely selective, with sites approached based on prior
22 research participation and/or alignment with our demographic requirements. From those expressing
23 interest, Participant Identification Centres (PICs) were selected using Index of Multiple Deprivation
24 (IMD) to ensure socio-economic diversity. Between June 2022 and February 2023, GPs sent
25 invitation letters to eligible patients identified via electronic records, while pharmacies and
26 community providers distributed invitations to patients following a health/BP check. The invitation
27 letter and information sheet are provided in the Supplementary Files 1-3).

28 Patients contacted the study team by phone or email to express interest. In GP, eligibility was
29 assessed in two stages: initial phone screening followed by an in-person BP check, usually conducted
30 by the research team, but occasionally via self-monitoring. Eligible, patients were enrolled and
31 completed baseline questionnaires during the appointment. For those identified via a health/BP
32 check, eligibility was confirmed during the initial call, and baseline data were collected via video call.
33 Each participant received a BP monitor to keep.

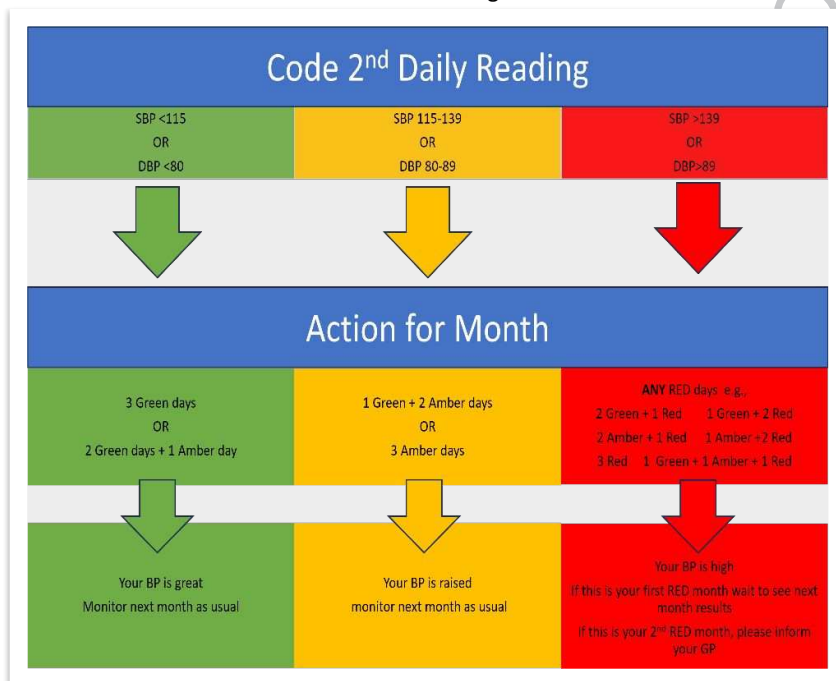
34 *Self-monitoring procedures*

35 All enrolled participants received online or in-person BP measuring and recording training,
36 supported by a booklet and video. After a practice week to ensure competency, participants began
37 monthly self-monitoring.

38 Participants were asked to measure BP on the first three days of each month for six months, at a
39 consistent time of their choosing, at least 30 minutes after food or exercise, and with medication

1 timing, in relation to the reading, kept consistent. They were asked to rest for five minutes before
 2 the first reading.
 3
 4 On each measurement day, two readings were taken five minutes apart and recorded with the time
 5 in their study booklet. Participants colour-coded the 2nd reading each day and the overall month,
 6 using a traffic light system (Figure 1), then submitted their sheet to the research team who checked
 7 the coding for protocol fidelity. If readings were Red for two consecutive months, participants were
 8 advised to inform their GP using a provided template.

9 **Figure 1:** BP coding algorithm. Note; based on standard clinical guidelines and reduced by 5/5 mmHg as
 10 recommended in the literature for home readings.



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Outcomes

The main feasibility outcomes reported in this paper are outlined in Table 1

Table 1: Outcomes for each study outcome

Objective	Outcome and Measure
Determine the willingness of people with BP in the prehypertension range, and service providers, to engage with a self-monitoring intervention	Number and proportion of services approached and expressing an interest in the study Number and proportion of patients expressing an interest in the study
Determine the feasibility of recruitment and attrition of people with BP in prehypertension range as well as primary care providers	Recruitment rates of sites and participants Sites - Time taken to recruit - Proportion of sites enrolled and actively recruiting Participants

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proportion of those expressing an interest who enrolled and started study - Time taken from expression of interest to being study active - Proportion of participants attending follow-ups - Proportion withdrawing from the study
Assess the feasibility of data collection and the completeness of collected data	Follow-up response rates Proportion of missing data at each time point (Baseline, 6-months, 12-months)
Evaluate UNCs (depression, Quality-of-Life, and health resource use)	Change from baseline to 6-months <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Depression score (Patient Health Questionnaire -9³⁶) - Healthcare utilisation (including consultations, medications and referrals attributable to the intervention) - Quality-of-Life³⁷ score (converted from EQ-5D-5L into 3L utility scores)
Explore changes in lifestyle and psychosocial factors	Change from baseline to 6-months <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lifestyle behaviours (SLIQ³⁸, Determinants of lifestyle behaviour questionnaire³⁹) - Illness perceptions (Adapted Brief Illness Perception Questionnaire⁴⁰ (IPQ-Brief)) - Risk perception (10-year and lifetime risk⁴¹) - Health locus-of-control (Multidimensional Health locus-of-control - form C⁴²)

1 Abbreviations: BP – Blood Pressure; PHT – Prehypertension; ED-5D-5L –EuroQol 5-dimensional, 5-level questionnaire;

2

3 *Data collection*

4 Patient reported outcome data was collected at three time-points: baseline, 6-months (primary
5 outcome) and 12-months. Baseline and 6-month data were collected by a researcher at a face-to-
6 face or online video call. 12-month data was collected to explore the feasibility of using an online
7 questionnaire. Aside from attrition and completeness of data, this paper will only report the 6-
8 month primary outcome data. In addition to the data outlined in Table 1, participant socio-
9 demographic and clinical data were also collected.

10

11 *Statistical analysis*

12 Data were analysed using mainly descriptive statistics. The mean total scores of selected secondary
13 outcomes were analysed in terms of change over time (pre- and post-intervention) by using
14 summary statistics and parametric (paired samples t-tests with related 95% confidence intervals
15 (CIs) reported) or nonparametric (Wilcoxon signed-rank test with related Z-statistics and p-values
16 reported) statistical tests (where appropriate). Health-related quality-of-life was assessed using the
17 EQ-5D-5L with the related responses converted into EQ-5D-3L utility scores (following NICE
18 guidance⁴³).

19

1 Results

2 *Willingness to engage*

3 Expressions of interest (EOIs) were received from 15 GPs, 8 pharmacies, 1 community provider and 1
4 community health check event exceeding the target of 6 GPs and pharmacies, and 1 community
5 provider. Initially we invited 3 GPs based on IMD, with two added later due to low pharmacy
6 recruitment. All invited GPs accepted. Three of eight invited pharmacies also accepted.

7 In general practice 24,397 eligible patients were identified, with 1,340 invitation letters sent in
8 batches. Mean patient EOI rate was 11.5% (n = 154) (Table 2).

9

10 **Table 2:** Invitation and EOIs received from potential participants contacted by General Practices
11 (GP).

	GP01	GP02	GP03	GP04	GP05	Total
Identified from electronic search <i>n</i>	14747	1115	1084	3298	4153	24,397
Letters sent <i>n (%)</i>	327 (2.2)	416 (37.3)	138 (12.7)	197 (6)	262 (6.3)	1340 (5.5)
Patient EOI received <i>n (%)</i>	31 (9.5)	61 (14.7)	30 (21.7)	14 (7.1)	18 (6.9)	154 (11.5)

12

13 Engagement from the pharmacies and community provider was limited, making it difficult to assess
14 patient willingness to engage. Twenty-four BP checks were reported in total from two of the three
15 pharmacies, with 10 patients eligible (42%), three (30%) taking an invitation pack, and one
16 contacting the research team (EOI rate; 10%). At the University-based community event, 15
17 invitations (10%) were handed out from 150 BP checks, with one EOI (EOI rate; 7%). No data was
18 received from the community provider. In total, 162 patient EOIs were received (Figure 2).

19

20 *Feasibility of recruitment*

21 *Sites*

22 Time from EOI to study active averaged 85 days in GPs (range 77-92), and 114 days in pharmacy
23 (range 18-186). The initial community provider withdrew with a replacement found late in the
24 recruitment period (EOI to active:5 days). The community event was active within a week. Only 1
25 pharmacy provided recruitment data, and none was received from the community provider. Two
26 additional GPs were invited to compensate for this poor engagement.

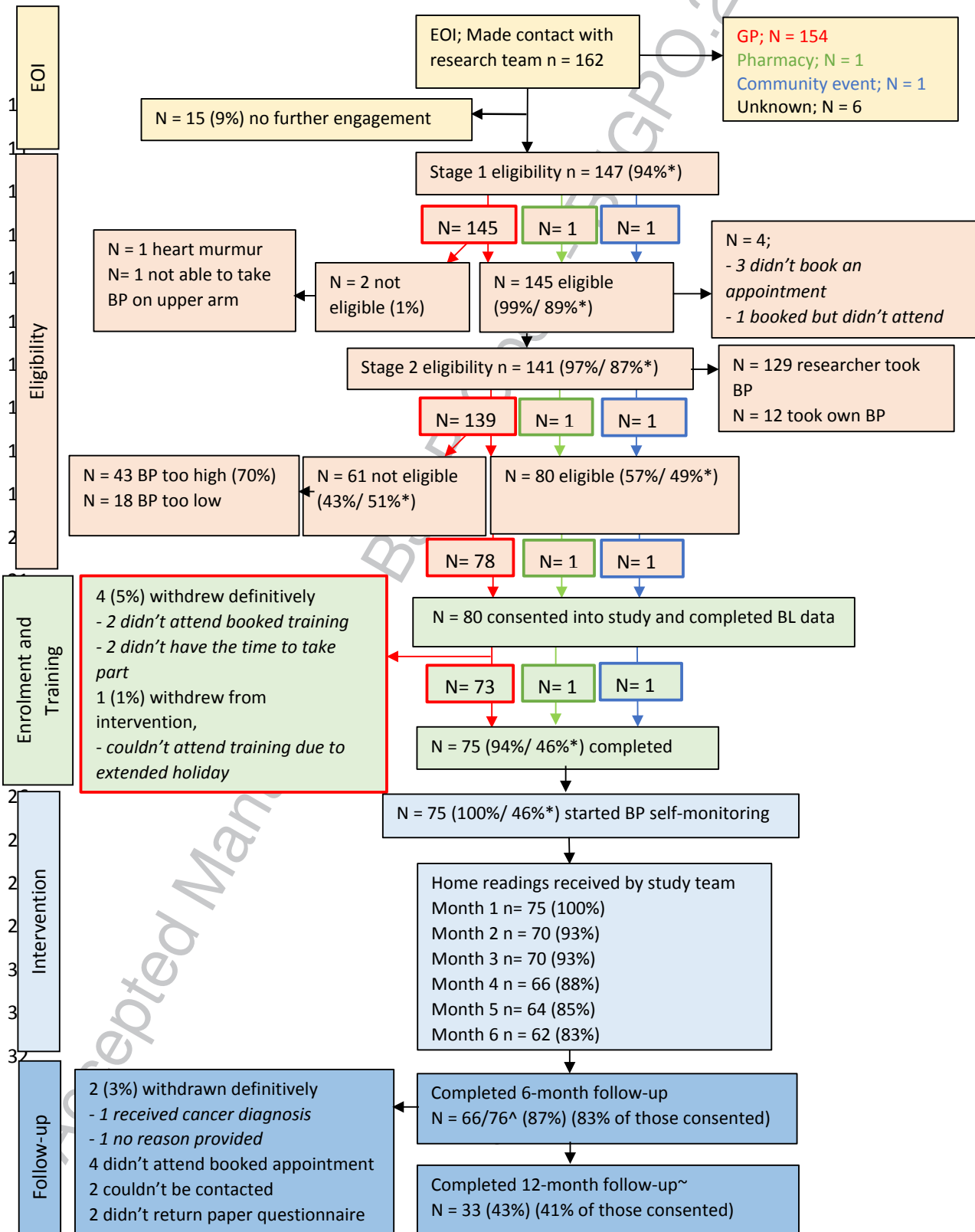
27 *Participants*

28 The recruitment target was 114 consented participants (38 per provider) to retain 90 at 6-months.
29 Overall, 80 participants consented; only 1 participant from each of pharmacy and community, but 78
30 from general practice. The original target was achieved in general practice in 4.5 months. Overall,
31 from 162 EOIs, 147 (94%) were screened, 80 were eligible and consented, and 75 began BP
32 monitoring (Figure 2).

1 *Sample characteristics*

2 Demographic and clinical data for the 66 complete cases and 14 lost to follow-up are in Table 3.
 3 Missing data was low: 1.8% at baseline, 3.9% at 6-months (Appendix 1). Apparent missing data for
 4 subjective norm was due to ‘not applicable’ or ‘don’t know’ responses, not actual omissions. At 12-
 5 months, where the questionnaire was delivered by email, missing data rose to 8.7%, still within
 6 target (>85% complete).

7 **Figure 2:** Consort diagram; Flow diagram of the REVERSE study from EOI



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Table 3: Demographic and clinical data for complete and lost to follow up cases.

	Baseline (n=66 complete cases)	6-months (n=66 complete cases)	Baseline (n=14 lost to follow-up)
Age median (IQR)	58.5 (52.0 to 65.75)	- ^a	57.0 (50.0 to 71.3)
Gender n (%)		- ^a	
- Female	39 (59.1)		6 (42.9)
- Male	27 (40.9)		8 (57.1)
Ethnicity n (%)	(n=64)	- ^a	(n=13)
- White	64 (100.0)		12 (92.3)
- Non-White	0 (0.0)		1 (7.7)
Index of multiple deprivation n (%)		- ^a	
- 1 st decile (most deprived)	0 (0.0)		2 (14.3)
- 2 nd decile	0 (0.0)		0 (0.0)
- 3 rd decile	5 (7.6)		3 (21.4)
- 4 th decile	4 (6.1)		3 (21.4)
- 5 th decile	9 (13.6)		1 (7.1)
- 6 th decile	11 (16.7)		1 (7.1)
- 7 th decile	7 (10.6)		1 (7.1)
- 8 th decile	8 (12.1)		2 (14.3)
- 9 th decile	14 (21.2)		1 (7.1)
- 10 th decile (least deprived)	8 (12.1)		0 (0.0)
Working status n (%)		- ^a	
- Full time	32 (48.5)		7 (50.0)
- Part-time	11 (16.7)		1 (7.1)
- Not working	2 (3.0)		1 (7.1)
- Retired	21 (31.8)		5 (35.7)
Highest education obtained n (%)		- ^a	(n=12)
- GCSE or equivalent	13 (19.7)		5 (41.7)
- A-level or equivalent	14 (21.2)		2 (16.7)
- Degree or equivalent	14 (21.2)		2 (16.7)
- Post-grad/ prof qualification	19 (28.8)		3 (25.0)
- Doctoral	2 (3.0)		0 (0.0)
Household income n (%)		(n=65 valid cases)	
- <=£20,000	2 (3.0)	3 (4.5)	4 (26.6)
- £20,001-£40,000	18 (27.3)	22 (33.3)	0 (0.0)
- £40,001-£60,000	16 (24.2)	11 (1.7)	4 (26.6)
- £60,001 - £80,000	5 (7.6)	6 (9.1)	1 (7.1)
- £80,001-£100,000	4 (6.1)	5 (7.6)	0 (0.0)
- > £100,000	6 (9.1)	8 (12.1)	0 (0.0)
- Don't know / rather not say	15 (22.7)	10 (15.2)	5 (35.7)
BP Median (interquartile range) in mmHg	(n=64 valid cases)	(n=58 valid cases)	(n=13 valid cases)
- Systolic	128.5 (122.0 to 135.0)		

- Diastolic	81.0 (76.3 to 85.0)	134.0 (124.8 to 142.0)	127.0 (123.0 to 135.5)
		82.0 (75.8 to 88.3)	81.0 (71.5 to 85.0)
BMI median (IQR)	(n=65 valid cases) 25.8 (22.9 to 28.8)	(n=64 valid cases) 24.8 (22.8 to 28.0)	(n=13 valid cases) 25.5 (22.1 to 28.7)
Waist circumference median (IQR) in cm	(n=58 valid cases) 90.0 (79.0 to 98.3)	(n=60 valid cases) 86.0 (76.0 to 91.0)	(n=12 valid cases) 88.0 (81.8 to 91.0)
Clinical history of: n (%)			
- Diabetes	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
- CKD	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
- AF/ irregular heartbeat	1 (1.5)	0 (0.0)	1 (7.1)
- High cholesterol	7 (10.6)	4 (6.1)	2 (14.3)
- CVD	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
- Dementia	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Previous BP self-monitoring n (%)			
- Yes	21 (31.8)	- ^a	4 (28.6)
- No	45 (68.2)		10 (71.4)

1 -^a = Data not re-collected at this time point

2

3 *Unintended negative consequences (UNCs e.g., QoL, depression, health resource use)*

4 Reported quality-of-life was high and depression low, at both baseline and 6-months (Table 4).

5 Although the study was not powered to detect change over time, exploratory analyses showed no
6 significant changes from baseline to 6-months: EQ-5D-3L utility scores (N=66; mean change: 0.01
7 (SD: 0.11); 95% CI: -0.02 to 0.04), PHQ-9 (n=65; mean change in total score: 0.1 (2.9), Z = -1.07, p=
8 0.29.

9 Seven participants used healthcare resources linked to raised BP from baseline to 6-months. This
10 included appointments with a GP (n=5 participants), another NHS professional (n=3) or a private
11 nurse (n=1), purchase of over-the-counter medications (n=1), and obtaining newly prescribed
12 medications (n=2). Four additional participants reported BP-related NHS appointment at 6-months
13 than at baseline.

14

15 **Table 4:** Unintended Negative Consequences (UNCs) for whole sample (N=80) and complete cases
16 (n=66) with change from Baseline to 6 Months.

	Baseline (N=80)	Baseline (n=66 complete cases)	6-Month (n=66 complete cases)	Change Baseline to 6-months (n=66 complete cases)
PHQ-9		(n=65 valid cases)		(n=65 valid cases)
Total mean (SD; range)	3.4 (3.7; 0 to 21)	3.3 (3.2; 0 to 13)	3.3 (2.8; 0 to 14)	0.1 (2.9); p = 0.29
Minimal n (%)	56 (70.9)	46 (70.8)	44 (66.7)	
Mild n (%)	17 (21.5)	14 (21.5)	21 (31.8)	
Moderate n (%)	5 (6.3)	5 (7.7)	1 (1.5)	
Moderately severe n (%)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	
Severe n (%)	1 (1.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	
EQ-5D-5L				

- 3-level utility score mean (SD; range)	0.86 (0.13; 0.37 to 0.99)	0.85 (0.12; 0.37 to 0.99)	0.86 (0.14; 0.40 to 0.99)	0.01 (0.11); 95% CI: -0.02 to 0.04
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1

2 *Change in lifestyle factors and blood pressure (BP).*

3 Feasibility of collecting lifestyle and psychosocial data was supported. Although not powered to
4 detect change, illness perceptions significantly decreased (M 26.6 (SD 8.6) to M 22.6 (SD 8.7), $p =$
5 0.002). No other significant changes were observed (Appendix 2).

6 Although change in BP was not a study outcome due to the feasibility nature of this study,
7 exploratory analyses showed that the mean changes from baseline to 6-months in BP Systolic and
8 Diastolic were respectively 4.5 mmHg ($n=56$; SD: 12.1; 95% CI: 1.2 to 7.7) and 1.7 mmHg ($n=56$; SD:
9 9.1; 95% CI: -0.7 to 4.1). Forty percent (23/58) of the participants had a BP in the hypertensive range
10 at 6-month follow-up.

11

12 **Discussion**

13 This study explored the feasibility of a primary care-based BP self-monitoring intervention for
14 individuals with prehypertension, focusing on engagement, recruitment, and data collection.
15 Recruitment was successful in general practice, where targets were exceeded within the planned
16 timeframe. However, attempts to recruit participants through pharmacies and community providers
17 were largely ineffective. While patient EOI was lower than anticipated, conversion from EOI to
18 screening was high, and most eligible participants consented and began the intervention. Retention
19 at 6-months was strong, exceeding the 80% threshold, although 12-month follow-up was lower,
20 likely due to its self-completed method. Importantly, there was no evidence of UNCs, and
21 exploratory findings suggest that self-monitoring may positively impact beliefs, intentions, and
22 behaviours related to CVD risk.

23 **Strengths and Limitations**

24 A key strength was the high conversion rate from EOI to screening and consent, suggesting that once
25 individuals engaged, they were motivated to participate. Thirty percent of patients identified as
26 prehypertensive in GP records, were found to have hypertensive-range BP at baseline (43/141),
27 supporting our rationale for intervening early. While this may reflect progression to hypertension
28 and highlight potential gaps in routine BP monitoring over the five-year search period (including the
29 COVID-19 pandemic), methodological limitations should also be considered. Elevated baseline
30 readings may not reflect true progression in all cases and could be influenced by white-coat
31 hypertension or by search-strategy limitations, which did not capture home BP readings, that are
32 often lower than clinic measurements.

33 Retention at 6-months was strong, with 83% completing follow-up, and missing data was low,
34 supporting the feasibility of data collection. The intervention was well-received, with no indication of
35 increased depression, reduced quality-of-life, or medicalisation of prehypertension; concerns often
36 raised with self-monitoring interventions.^{35,44} The traffic light system for BP categorisation appeared
37 well understood and acceptable to participants. Forty percent of participants at 6-month follow-up
38 had BP in the hypertensive range. Although high, this should be interpreted cautiously, as 6-month
39 BP was self-measured at a single time point, and cannot be taken as a definitive diagnosis.

1 However, there were limitations. Patient EOI was lower than expected, and recruitment was only
2 successful in general practice. Pharmacy and community provider engagement was ineffective, and
3 despite efforts to understand participant identification, data from these settings was not provided.
4 This limited our ability to assess how many patients were approached and what barriers may have
5 influenced recruitment. We considered whether the preventative nature of the intervention, or
6 conflicting messages about BP status between the research team and usual care providers, may have
7 contributed to low EOI. However, interview findings (in preparation) suggest this was not a major
8 barrier, likely due to the clear, patient-informed wording used in study materials.

9 In pharmacy settings, we speculate that low numbers of BP checks (possibly due to prioritisation of
10 the COVID-19 vaccination programme), alongside limited research infrastructure and time
11 constraints, contributed to poor recruitment. For the community provider, timing was likely a
12 factor, as their involvement coincided with the end of the recruitment phase and the Christmas
13 period.

14 Despite a recruitment strategy aimed at reaching ethnically and socioeconomically diverse
15 individuals, the final sample was predominately white, well-educated and from areas of low
16 deprivation. This limits generalisability and highlights the need for improved strategies to engage
17 under-served populations in future research.

18

19 **Comparisons with existing literature**

20 Our findings align with limited existing literature on barriers to pharmacy involvement in research,
21 which cite time constraints, lack of funding, limited research training, and unsupportive
22 environments as key challenges.^{45,46} While pharmacists are willing to engage in research, these
23 systemic issues appear to have hindered participation.

24 Similarly, our exploratory findings support existing evidence that self-monitoring can be
25 beneficial,^{35,44} and does not lead to increased, unnecessary healthcare use. Although non-significant,
26 the increase in personal control and dietary intentions aligns with theoretical models suggesting self-
27 monitoring can enhance awareness and empower individuals to make lifestyle changes.^{45,48} The
28 significant reduction in illness perceptions is particularly noteworthy, as this may represent an early
29 mechanism through which self-monitoring could support long-term behaviour change and risk
30 reduction.

31

32 **Implications for research/ practice**

33 Future research should prioritise early and sustained engagement with community and pharmacy
34 providers to better understand and address participation barriers. While general practice
35 recruitment was successful, relying solely on this setting conflicts with the aim of delivering a
36 community-based, patient-managed intervention. Community-based recruitment remains essential,
37 to reduce the burden on general practice and also to reach those who may not regularly attend GP
38 appointments.

39 Improving participant diversity is also critical. Future studies should include targeted outreach to
40 non-white and less affluent populations, who are often at greater risk of prehypertension and its
41 progression to CVD. Many community providers now deliver health checks in workplaces, places of
42 worship and leisure settings, routes that could be leveraged to improve reach and inclusivity. Co-

1 designing recruitment strategies with community partners and patient representatives may also help
2 to build trust and relevance.

3 Further investigation into the psychological and behavioural impacts of self-monitoring in
4 prehypertension is warranted. While this study was not powered to detect change, the observed
5 shifts in illness perceptions, personal control and dietary intentions suggest that self-monitoring may
6 support behaviour change to reduce cardiovascular risk over time. Future trials should explore these
7 mechanisms more fully.

8 Finally, the lower response rate at 12-months highlights the need to consider alternative follow-up
9 methods. While email-based data collection is efficient, it may not be suitable for all participants or
10 for longer-term follow-up. Mixed-methods approaches, as used at 6-months, (e.g., telephone and
11 on-line), may improve retention and data completeness.

12

13 **Conclusions**

14 This feasibility study indicates that BP self-monitoring for prehypertension is acceptable and feasible
15 in general practice, with strong participant engagement, high retention and minimal missing data.
16 However, recruitment was not feasible in pharmacy or community provider settings, highlighting the
17 need for further collaboration and tailored strategies in these areas. Data collection with researcher-
18 led follow-up resulted in higher completion rates than online self-report methods. No unexpected
19 negative consequences were reported, and early findings suggest that self-monitoring may positively
20 influence psychological and behavioural factors linked to CVD risk. With improved inclusion of
21 under-served groups and more diverse recruitment strategies, these feasibility findings support
22 development of a future effectiveness trial to determine the impact of self-monitoring in people
23 with prehypertension.

24

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40

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