This is the accepted version of the manuscript published by Elsevier in (Abstracts) *Appetite*, available online: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2014.12.136

## [Appetite](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/01956663) [Volume 87](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/01956663/87/supp/C), 1 April 2015, Page 382

Recruiting families to a childhood obesity management trial. Active vs passive methods

[J.Kirby](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0195666314006898#!)

[A. Kamal](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0195666314006898#!)

[E. Harrison](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0195666314006898#!)

[R. Lang](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0195666314006898#!)

[S. Stewart-Brown](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0195666314006898#!)

[M. Thorogood](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0195666314006898#!)

[F. Griffiths](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0195666314006898#!)

[W. Robertson](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0195666314006898#!)

University of Warwick, Coventry, UK.

Recruitment to trials evaluating the effectiveness of childhood obesity management interventions is challenging. We report our experience of recruitment to the ‘Families for Health’ study – a randomised controlled trial evaluating the effectiveness of a family based community treatment for children aged 6–11 years, versus ‘usual care’. The aim is to evaluate the effectiveness of ‘active’ recruitment (contacting eligible families directly) versus ‘passive’ recruitment (informing the community through flyers, public events, media). Initial approaches included passive recruitment via the media (newspapers, radio) and two active recruitment methods: National Child Measurement Programme (letters to families with overweight child) and referrals from health care professionals. With slow initial recruitment, further strategies were employed, including active (e.g. targeted letters from GPs) and passive (e.g. flyers, posters, public events) methods. In total, 194 families enquired about ‘Families for Health’, and 115 (59.3%) were recruited and randomised. Information was available for 184 families about how they heard about the trial. Active recruitment yielded 83 (45.1%) potential participants, with 41 (49.4%) recruited; passive recruitment yielded 101

(54.9%) potential participants, with 74 (73.3%) recruited. A higher proportion was recruited following passive recruitment (73.3% vs 49.4%, p < 0.001). Information seen at school or GP surgery accounted for over a quarter of enquiries (29%) and over a third (39%) of final recruitment. Eight out of ten families who enquired this way were recruited. Media-led enquiries were low (5%), but all were recruited. The success of passive recruitment is likely due to the large number of potential participants it reaches and, in line with motivation theory, families recruited this way may be motivated intrinsically whereas those via active methods motivated extrinsically. Our findings are within a trial setting, but passive recruitment methods used by health services recruiting families to weight management services are likely to be more effective than active recruitment alone.