

School-based interventions to prevent gambling and vaping harm in adolescents: PROGRAM-A and REVAMP

Dr Martine Miller, Angela Niven, Vicky Moynihan, Professor Linda Bauld, Dr Fiona Dobbie. Centre for Population Health Sciences
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Background: Young people’s engagement in gambling can be linked to gambling-related harm (GRH). This can cause stress, anxiety, relationship issues, debt, and lost opportunities⁽¹⁾. There is a lack of independently funded, and evidence-based school-based interventions that seek to prevent and reduce the harms associated with gambling. PRoGRAM-A is one of the first independently research funded interventions to prevent gambling related harm in adolescents ⁽²⁾. This paper presents results from the pilot cluster RCT and the embedded process evaluation of PRoGRAM-A, with a specific focus on intervention fidelity, feasibility and acceptability⁽³⁾.

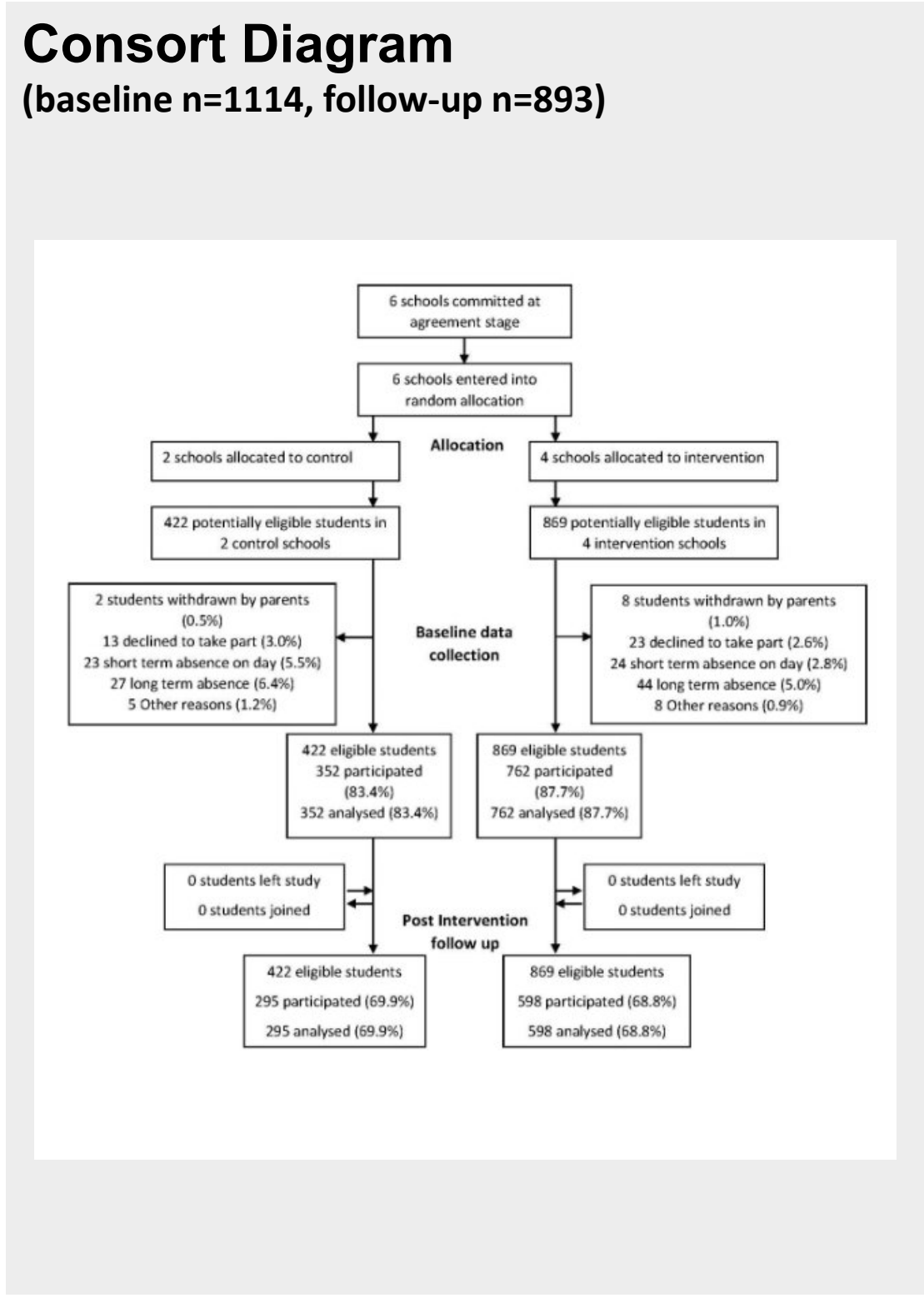
- Aims and Research Questions:**
- The overall aim of the pilot cRCT of a PRoGRAM-A was to determine the utility of conducting a Phase III RCT to assess effectiveness and cost-effectiveness.
 - To test delivery of PRoGRAM-A in a real world setting.
 - Unpacked via 13 RQs looking at:
 - Recruitment and randomised trial delivery
 - Acceptability, feasibility and fidelity of intervention delivery.

- Methods:**
- The pilot cluster Randomised Control Trial (RCT) of PRoGRAM-A commenced in March 2023. PRoGRAM-A was delivered in four secondary schools across the Scottish central belt, with two control schools.
 - An embedded multi-modal process evaluation ran parallel to the delivery of PRoGRAM-A intervention.
 - Embedded social network analysis
 - The Trial was delivered over a 12 month period from November 2023 and November 2024



- PRoGRAM-A**
- A novel peer-led, social network intervention grounded in diffusion and network intervention theory.
 - Secondary school students aged 13-15 were asked to nominate opinion leaders within their year group, to become a ‘Peer Supporter’.
 - Students across an entire year group (aged 13–15 year-olds) complete the following questions: ‘who do you respect’; ‘who are good leaders in sports and other group activities’; and ‘who do you look up to’.
 - Purpose of the nomination form was for students (not teaching staff) to identify students of influence.
 - Students receiving the most nominations (18%) were invited to become Peer Supporters and take part in a two-day gambling education training programme.
 - Training was delivered by youth workers to Peer Supporters using fun and engaging activities, centred on four key topics: what is gambling, gambling and gaming, gambling marketing, and gambling harm.
 - Peer Supporters are then encouraged to initiate conversations about gambling harm with their peers, friends and family networks, using communication styles they judged to be most appropriate.

- Results**
Successfully met preset criteria for progression to Phase III Randomised Control Trial (RCT).
- Acceptability**
- High acceptability among all stakeholder groups in relation to:
 - Topic relevance
 - External trainer and peer trainer delivery model
 - Teacher willingness to embed PRoGRAM-A in future curriculum
 - Acceptability of relevance and ease of integration of PRoGRAM-A into school curriculum.
- Feasibility**
- High fidelity in pilot delivery (all topics and activities delivered).
 - Positive reception to peer-led intervention model across all stakeholder groups.
- Intervention refinements**
- Incorporate lived experiences in training.
 - Enhance engagement with female students.



Next Steps: Prepare funding application to National Institute for Health Care Research (NIHR) for a Phase III Randomised Control Trial that will involve 58 secondary schools across Scotland, England and Wales.

Background: The rise of vaping among young people, especially girls and young people from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas, is a public health concern⁽⁴⁾. While the long-term health effects of adolescent vaping are still emerging, early evidence links vaping with developmental, neurological, respiratory and cardiovascular health impacts⁽⁵⁾. There are currently no evidence-based vaping prevention intervention tailored to the UK secondary school setting. This study aims to develop a contextually-relevant intervention to protect young people in Scotland from experimentation with vaping, smoking, and emerging nicotine products.

- Aims:**
- To co-create programme theory and activities for a vaping and nicotine prevention programme for Scottish secondary schools.
- Methods:**
- Literature review to map existing adolescent vaping prevention interventions globally and locally
 - Qualitative consultation to identify key prevention messages and delivery considerations, with:
 - Pupils aged 11-13 (n=24)
 - Teachers (n=8),
 - Parents/carers (n=10)
 - Health and education stakeholders (n=10)
 - Co-creation workshops with stakeholders to develop programme theory and refine intervention manual.

Two schools are participating in qualitative fieldwork, including one each from areas of high and low deprivation.

- REVAMP**
- Reducing Experimentation of Vaping and tobacco use AMong young People**
- REVAMP aims to be one of the first evidence-based vaping, tobacco and nicotine prevention programme for Scottish secondary schools.
- Programme theory is currently being developed in consultation with pupils, staff, and parents.



- Preliminary Findings**
- Literature Review**
- Evaluations of international interventions suggest effectiveness of peer-based approaches, skills programming, and interventions delivered over multiple sessions
- Qualitative Consultation**
- Widespread support for school-based intervention
 - Intervention should be adaptable to address emerging nicotine products and a rapidly changing regulatory environment.

- Next Steps:**
- Qualitative interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders are ongoing
 - Analysis will be used to generate a preliminary theory of change which will be refined and further developed during stakeholders workshops in Autumn 2025.