

Background. People need to perceive a risk in order to build an intention-to-change behaviour yet our ability to interpret information about risk is highly variable.

Use of focus groups to develop methods to communicate cardiovascular disease risk and potential for risk reduction to people with type 2 diabetes

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Objectives. We aimed to use a user-centred design process to develop an animated interface for the UK Prospective Diabetes Study (UKPDS) Risk Engine to illustrate cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk and the potential to reduce this risk. In addition, we sought to use the same approach to develop a brief lifestyle advice intervention.

Methods. Three focus groups were held. Participants were provided with examples of materials used to communicate CVD risk and a leaflet containing a draft brief lifestyle advice intervention and considered their potential to increase motivation-to-change behaviours including diet, physical activity, and smoking in order to reduce CVD risk. Discussions were tape-recorded, transcribed and coded and recurring themes sought.

Results. Sixty-two percent of participants were male, mean age was 66 years (range = 47–76 years) and median age at leaving full-time education was 18 years (range = 15–40 years). Sixteen had type 2 diabetes and none had a prior history of CVD. Recurring themes from focus group discussions included the following: being less numerate is common, CVD risk reduction is important and a clear visual representation aids comprehension.

Conclusion. A simple animated interface of the UKPDS Risk Engine to illustrate CVD risk and the potential for reducing this risk has been developed for use as a motivational tool, along with a brief lifestyle advice intervention. Future work will investigate whether use of this interactive version of the UKPDS Risk Engine and brief lifestyle advice is associated with increased behavioural intentions and changes in health behaviours designed to reduce CVD risk.