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Purpose: To explore a secondary use of TrakCare™ to support research activity through effective and efficient, targeted recruitment.

Introduction

Traditional recruitment places demand on clinician time in clinics. It can be a time-consuming, disruptive and resource-intensive approach. TrakCare™ – a new information system introduced in December 2014 – offers an alternative mode of recruitment. New patients attending specific sub-specialty clinics can be recruited by invitation letter, putting the choice directly to the patient.

Traditional recruitment	TrakCare™ recruitment
Gatekeeper clinician identifies individual patient	TrakCare™ manager identifies groups of patients
Gatekeeper clinician introduces patient to researcher	Automated invitations issued to groups of patients
Patient in clinic	Patient at home

The PROMfoot study was a medium scale repeated measures observational survey. It required the recruitment of a large and representative sample of podiatric service users. NHS GGC utilised TrakCare™ to identify new patients attending specific sub-specialty clinics to be invited to participate in PROMfoot research.

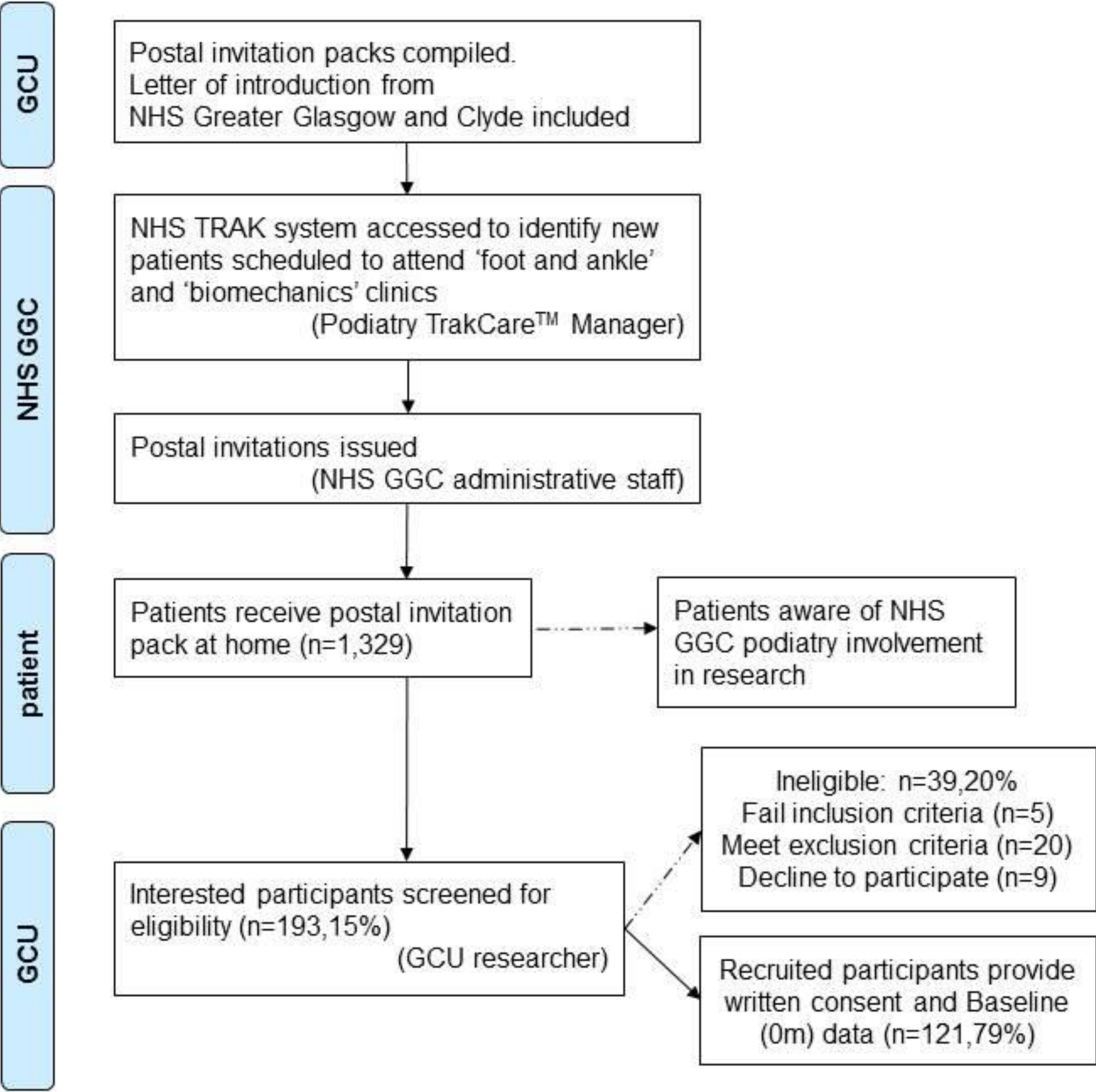
Methods

Postal recruitment was co-ordinated jointly between NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHS GGC) (leading participant first contact) and Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) (leading recruitment screening).

References:
 Study approved by NHS Research Ethics Committee (study reference number 16/SS/0193).

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Figure 1: Flow diagram of recruitment stages



Results

Between January and December 2017, across podiatry services in NHS GGC:

- ❑ 6,124 MSK/Biomechanics appointments
- ❑ including 2,930 new contacts.
- ❑ 1,329 personal invitations issued to new contact patients.

193 patients responded by: Post (85%), Telephone (10%), Email (4%)

15% of patients who received a personal invitation to participate in the research replied.

Discussion

Using TrakCare™ to support recruitment for research provided an opportunity to target and inform a large and relevant group of people about new research projects. This method may be more efficient for recruitment of representative samples of NHS patients for research being undertaken over several NHS sites.

Using TrakCare™ potentially offers an efficient route to patient involvement in health outcomes research by using expertise of administrative staff and reducing the burden of clinician gatekeeper roles. It requires staff time to identify and compile targeted lists in TrakCare™ and resource for administrative activities.

Patient perspectives on recruitment (by letter or in clinic) need considered.

