The Baby Check booklet did not affect frequency of health service use in infants ≤6 months of age


QUESTION: In mothers with infants ≤6 months of age, does the distribution of the booklet Baby Check (an illness scoring system) affect their use of health services?

Design
Randomised (allocation not concealed*), blinded (practitioners),* controlled trial with 6-month follow-up.

Setting
13 practices (53 general practitioners, 4400–11 000 patients per practice) in southeastern Glasgow, Scotland.

Patients
997 mothers (mean age 29 y, 45% primiparous) who had babies (53% boys, 95% full term) born during a period of 14 months. Participants were excluded if physicians thought that mothers or babies were too sick for inclusion or if mothers did not speak English. Only the first child of a multiple birth was included. Follow-up was 94%.

Intervention
After stratification by practice, participants were allocated to the Baby Check group (n = 497) or a control group (n = 500). All mothers received a copy of an accident prevention leaflet (Play It Safe), and mothers in the intervention group received a copy of the booklet Baby Check, which includes information about how to use the Baby Check illness scoring system and when to consult a physician or health visitor.

Main outcome measure
Consultations with physicians were assessed by reviewing general practice notes.

Main results
No differences existed between groups for the use of primary care services (p > 0.2) (table). The study had 80% power to detect a 10% relative difference at a 5% level of significance. For both groups, 2 general practice consultations was the median rate during the first 6 months of life.

Conclusion
In mothers with infants ≤6 months of age, the distribution of the booklet Baby Check did not affect frequency of use of health services.

“See glossary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes at 6 months</th>
<th>Baby Check</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>RRR (95% CI)</th>
<th>NNH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 consultations</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>11% (−17 to 32)</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥5 consultations</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>17% (−9 to 52)</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Baby Check booklet v no booklet in mothers with infants ≤6 months of age† |

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