



CAT - Creating Aceptable Tablets

Summary of feasibility study to assess the swallowability and acceptability of different sized placebo tablets in children and young people (Creating Acceptable Tablets - CAT)

Aim:

It can be challenging to administer medicines to children and young people (CYP); due to the lack of available age-appropriate formulations. Developing medicines that are acceptable to CYP has the potential to improve treatment outcomes¹. Acceptability has been defined as “an overall ability of the patient and caregiver (defined as “user”) to use a medicinal product as intended”. There is limited evidence for the acceptability of tablets in CYP. This feasibility study aimed to investigate the swallowability and acceptability of different sized placebo tablets in CYP aged 4-12.



Method:

Participants were asked to swallow three different sized placebo tablets; 6mm, 8mm and 10mm, smallest to largest. Both healthy children and NHS patients were recruited. The researcher observed and recorded children's facial expressions as they swallowed each tablet. Following administration, an internal inspection of the mouth was conducted to identify any residue or non-swallowed tablet. Participants completed a questionnaire about the acceptability of each tablet. For analysis participants were stratified by age: 4-8 and 9-12 years.

Results:

55 participants were recruited to the study. 30 children were in the younger group, of which 23% had taken a tablet before. 84% of the 25 older children had previously taken a tablet. 100% of participants attempted to swallow the 6mm tablet, with 67% of younger children and all older children successfully swallowing the tablet. All participants in the older group attempted to swallow the 8mm and 10mm tablet with 100% successfully swallowing the 8mm and 96% successfully swallowing the 10mm tablet. 77% of younger children attempted to swallow the 8mm tablet, with 91% succeeding. 70% of younger children attempted the 10mm tablet, with 95% succeeding.

Conclusion:

This study demonstrated that tablets are potentially an acceptable formulation for children aged 4–12 years. Most children aged 4–8 years who attempted to swallow tablets successfully did so. Lessons have been learnt from this feasibility study which will inform the design of a larger definitive trial.

