

# Recruitment and retention in palliative care trials: challenges and strategies

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Successful participant recruitment and retention is one of the main challenges in palliative care trials as patients with a serious illness and their families often experience high levels of distress and burden.

**We invite you to share your experienced challenges and the strategies you have used to overcome these challenges on a post-it and add it to our poster.** Based on three existing palliative care trials, we already shared some of our experiences.

## Three palliative care trials

**Frailty+:** a timely short-term specialised palliative care service intervention for older people with frailty and complex care needs and their family carers in primary care aimed at reducing their symptom burden.

**DIAdIC:** two psychoeducational interventions (nurse-led face-to-face and a self-administered webtool) for people with advanced cancer and their family caregiver aimed at improving patient-family caregiver dyads' quality of life.

**BOOST pACP:** a paediatric advance care planning intervention for adolescents with cancer and their parents aimed at improving parent-adolescent communication on Advance Care Planning (ACP) themes.

## Recruitment and retention challenges

Gatekeeping from healthcare professionals

Performing multi-site studies leading to a lack of control over procedures and spending time on arranging contracts to share information

Keeping a rigid timeline (f.e. time window of enrollment, planning intervention sessions) versus required flexibility in working with people with serious diseases

Randomising into groups adds complexity. Some families or patients have a preference for a group or people get confused by the randomisation aspect.

**Please add your experiences to our poster with post-its!**

## Strategies used to overcome these challenges

Involve recruitment sites in the design of your study

Set up a thorough screening process in advance

Do a pilot study in advance to get a realistic estimate of your enrollment rate

Optimize communication and collaboration with healthcare professionals and keep them engaged prior and throughout the study

**Please add strategies to our poster with post-its!**