

## **Supplemental Material 7. Exclusion of three included studies from meta-analysis**

In one study<sup>30</sup>, the participants were allocated either to receive a diary through postal administration, or telephone administration, or clinic visits; then, they were randomised either to receive a £2 voucher or no voucher to complete the diary. The way the study was run and analysed did not allow the reviewers to include its results in the meta-analysis, since the features of an appropriate 3x2 factorial SWAT were not addressed. The findings of the study suggest that providing a £2 voucher was a cost-effective strategy that eventually reduced the average costs per returned diary, compared to participants who did not receive the voucher. These results are in line with the corresponding meta-analysis of providing financial incentives as a strategy to improve participant retention in RCTs.

Another study included a costing figure which is hypothetical and for which no clear stratification of incremental effects and costs has been made<sup>35</sup>. However, its reported cost per additional questionnaire returned (£67, or \$94.63 in PPP rates) does not significantly diverge from the quantitative findings of the meta-analysis of financial incentives as a retention strategy.

Finally, another SWAT<sup>19</sup> explored several interventions associated with financial incentives, i.e., different types of £5 vouchers and a £250 draw, however its reported figure of cost per additional questionnaire returned, i.e., £110.15, or \$156.02 in PPP rates, does cumulatively correspond to all interventions, with no explanation behind the stratification of the figure. As a result, it was impossible to include this study (SWAT) in the meta-analysis of the financial incentives as a strategy to improve participant retention in RCTs, since the incremental costs associated with each intervention could not be computed by the reviewers.