

Effectiveness of mucoactives (carbocisteine and hypertonic saline) in addition to usual airway clearance management with usual airway clearance management alone in acute respiratory failure (MARCH): study protocol for a multi-centre 2x2 factorial, randomised, controlled, open-label, Phase 3, pragmatic, clinical and cost effectiveness trial with internal pilot

SPIRIT checklist including factorial extension details

Section/ item	Item No	Description	Page No
Administrative information			
Title	1	Descriptive title identifying the study as a factorial randomized trial, as well as the population, interventions, and, if applicable, trial acronym	1
Trial registration	2a	Trial identifier and registry name. If not yet registered, name of intended registry	2
	2b	All items from the World Health Organization Trial Registration Data Set	N/A
Protocol version	3	Date and version identifier	24
Funding	4	Sources and types of financial, material, and other support	24
Roles and responsibilities	5a	Names, affiliations, and roles of protocol contributors	1, and information added during submission
	5b	Name and contact information for the trial sponsor	24
	5c	Role of study sponsor and funders, if any, in study design; collection, management, analysis, and interpretation of data; writing of the report; and the decision to submit the report for publication, including whether they will have ultimate authority over any of these activities	25

	5d	Composition, roles, and responsibilities of the coordinating centre, steering committee, endpoint adjudication committee, data management team, and other individuals or groups overseeing the trial, if applicable (see Item 21a for data monitoring committee)	13, 20-21
Introduction			
Background and rationale	6a	Description of research question and justification for undertaking the trial, including summary of relevant studies (published and unpublished) examining benefits and harms for each intervention, and rationale for using a factorial design, including whether an interaction is hypothesized	4-5, 12, 17
	6b	Explanation for choice of comparators	5
Objectives	7	Specific objectives or hypotheses and a statement of which treatment groups form the main comparisons	5-6
Trial design	8	Description of the type of factorial trial (eg, full or partial, number of factors, levels within each factor), allocation ratio, and framework (eg, superiority, equivalence, noninferiority, exploratory)	7
Methods: Participants, interventions, and outcomes			
Study setting	9	Description of study settings (eg, community clinic, academic hospital) and list of countries where data will be collected. Reference to where list of study sites can be obtained	8
Eligibility criteria	10	Inclusion and exclusion criteria for each factor, noting any differences if applicable. If applicable, eligibility criteria for study centers and individuals who will perform the interventions (eg, surgeons, psychotherapists)	8-9
Interventions	11a	Interventions for each group with sufficient detail to allow replication, including how and when they will be administered	9-10

	11b	Criteria for discontinuing or modifying allocated interventions for a given trial participant (eg, drug dose change in response to harms, participant request, or improving/worsening disease)	10
	11c	Strategies to improve adherence to intervention protocols, and any procedures for monitoring adherence (eg, drug tablet return, laboratory tests)	10
	11d	Relevant concomitant care and interventions that are permitted or prohibited during the trial	11
Outcomes	12	Primary, secondary, and other outcomes, including the specific measurement variable (eg, systolic blood pressure), analysis metric (eg, change from baseline, final value, time to event), method of aggregation (eg, median, proportion), and time point for each outcome. Explanation of the clinical relevance of chosen efficacy and harm outcomes is strongly recommended	11-12
Participant timeline	13	Time schedule of enrolment, interventions (including any run-ins and washouts), assessments, and visits for participants. A schematic diagram is highly recommended (see Figure)	12, Figure 1
Sample size	14	Estimated number of participants needed to achieve study objectives and how it was determined for each main comparison, including clinical and statistical assumptions supporting any sample size calculations, such as whether an interaction was assumed in the calculation	12
Recruitment	15	Strategies for achieving adequate participant enrolment to reach target sample size	13
Methods: Assignment of interventions (for controlled trials)			
Allocation:			

Sequence generation	16a	Method of generating the allocation sequence (eg, computer-generated random numbers), list of any variables for stratification, and whether participants were allocated to factors at different time points, if applicable. To reduce predictability of a random sequence, details of any planned restriction (eg, blocking) should be provided in a separate document that is unavailable to those who enrol participants or assign interventions	15
Allocation concealment mechanism	16b	Mechanism of implementing the allocation sequence (eg, central telephone; sequentially numbered, opaque, sealed envelopes), describing any steps to conceal the sequence until interventions are assigned	15
Implementation	16c	Who will generate the allocation sequence, who will enrol participants, and who will assign participants to interventions	15
Blinding (masking)	17a	Who will be blinded after assignment to interventions (eg, trial participants, care providers, outcome assessors, data analysts), and how	15
	17b	If blinded, circumstances under which unblinding is permissible, and procedure for revealing a participant's allocated intervention during the trial	N/A
Methods: Data collection, management, and analysis			
Data collection methods	18a	Plans for assessment and collection of outcome, baseline, and other trial data, including any related processes to promote data quality (eg, duplicate measurements, training of assessors) and a description of study instruments (eg, questionnaires, laboratory tests) along with their reliability and validity, if known. Reference to where data collection forms can be found, if not in the protocol	16
	18b	Plans to promote participant retention and complete follow-up, including list of any outcome data to be collected for participants who discontinue or deviate from intervention protocols	16

Data management	19	Plans for data entry, coding, security, and storage, including any related processes to promote data quality (eg, double data entry; range checks for data values). Reference to where details of data management procedures can be found, if not in the protocol	16
Statistical methods	20a	Statistical methods for each main comparison for primary and secondary outcomes, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the target treatment effect for each main comparison pertains to the effect in the presence or absence of other factors; • Approach, such as factorial or multiarm; • How the approach will be chosen, such as pre-specified or based on estimated interaction; • If factorial approach to analysis will be used, whether factors will be adjusted for each other; • Method(s) for evaluating statistical interactions, and which outcomes (in addition to the primary) they will be applied to; • If applicable, how non-concurrent recruitment to factors will be handled; and • Reference to where other details of the statistical analysis plan can be found, if not in the protocol 	17-19
	20b	Methods for any additional analyses (eg, subgroup and adjusted analyses)	17-19
	20c	Definition of analysis population relating to protocol non-adherence (eg, as randomised analysis), and any statistical methods to handle missing data (eg, multiple imputation)	17-19
Methods: Monitoring			
Data monitoring	21a	Composition of data monitoring committee (DMC); summary of its role and reporting structure; statement of whether it is independent from the sponsor and competing interests; and reference to where further details about its charter can be found, if not in the protocol. Alternatively, an explanation of why a DMC is not needed	21-22

	21b	Description of any interim analyses and stopping guidelines, noting any differences across main comparisons, with reasons, and who will have access to these interim results and make the final decision to terminate the trial	17
Harms	22	Plans for collecting, assessing, reporting, and managing solicited and spontaneously reported adverse events and other unintended effects of trial interventions or trial conduct	20
Auditing	23	Frequency and procedures for auditing trial conduct, if any, and whether the process will be independent from investigators and the sponsor	20
Ethics and dissemination			
Research ethics approval	24	Plans for seeking research ethics committee/institutional review board (REC/IRB) approval	22
Protocol amendments	25	Plans for communicating important protocol modifications (eg, changes to eligibility criteria, outcomes, analyses) to relevant parties (eg, investigators, REC/IRBs, trial participants, trial registries, journals, regulators)	22
Consent or assent	26a	Who will obtain informed consent or assent from potential trial participants or authorised surrogates, and how (see Item 32)	13-15
	26b	Additional consent provisions for collection and use of participant data and biological specimens in ancillary studies, if applicable	14
Confidentiality	27	How personal information about potential and enrolled participants will be collected, shared, and maintained in order to protect confidentiality before, during, and after the trial	22
Declaration of interests	28	Financial and other competing interests for principal investigators for the overall trial and each study site	25
Access to data	29	Statement of who will have access to the final trial dataset, and disclosure of contractual agreements that limit such access for investigators	22

Ancillary and post-trial care	30	Provisions, if any, for ancillary and post-trial care, and for compensation to those who suffer harm from trial participation	22-23
Dissemination policy	31a	Plans for investigators and sponsor to communicate trial results to participants, healthcare professionals, the public, and other relevant groups (eg, via publication, reporting in results databases, or other data sharing arrangements), including any publication restrictions	23
	31b	Authorship eligibility guidelines and any intended use of professional writers	23
	31c	Plans, if any, for granting public access to the full protocol, participant-level dataset, and statistical code	23
Appendices			
Informed consent materials	32	Model consent form and other related documentation given to participants and authorised surrogates	Open access trial website, https://nictu.hscni.net/service/march-trial/
Biological specimens	33	Plans for collection, laboratory evaluation, and storage of biological specimens for genetic or molecular analysis in the current trial and for future use in ancillary studies, if applicable	14