even in children with higher levels of adiposity.


**Change of wording regarding consent may influence patient take-up for HIV screening**

The way in which patients are offered an HIV test significantly affects whether or not they accept the test, new research suggests.

In the first randomised, controlled trial to evaluate consent for HIV testing, US researchers studied 4,800 emergency department patients, aged 13-64 years, who were not already known to have HIV.

The patients were randomised to three groups offering different approaches to testing: ‘opt-in’ – notifying patients that HIV testing was available but requiring them to ask for a test; ‘active choice’ – directly asking patients if they would like an HIV test; and ‘opt-out’ – telling patients they will be tested unless they decline.

The researchers found that 38% of patients in the opt-in group accepted a test, compared with 51% in the active choice group and 66% in the opt-out group.

They said that patients in all groups who were identified as being at intermediate and high risk of contracting HIV were more likely to accept testing than those considered low risk, and that the opt-out effect was significantly smaller among those reporting high-risk behaviours. The active choice effect did not significantly vary by level of reported risk behaviour.

‘Our study provides evidence that small changes in wording can significantly affect patients’ behaviour and thus our understanding of their preferences,’ the study authors said.


**How and when psychological treatment is given can affect patient perception of success**

Psychological therapies may be more effective when patient preferences are accommodated by the service, new study results suggest.

Researchers from the Royal College of Psychiatrists and Imperial College London analysed data from 14,587 patients who received psychological treatment from 184 NHS services in England and Wales in 2012/13.

All the patients were involved in the National Audit of Psychological Therapies for Anxiety and Depression – a large-scale examination of the practice of psychological therapies in England and Wales.

The researchers looked at five aspects of treatment preferences: venue, time of day, gender of therapist, language in which the treatment was delivered, and therapy type.

They found that 86% of patients expressed a preference for at least one of the five aspects, with time of day and location being the two most popular. Of these patients, 36.7% said at least one of their preferences had not been met.

The researchers said that how, when and where psychological treatment is delivered can affect how it is perceived by patients, and that those whose preferences are not met are less likely to report their treatment was helpful.

‘While we are unable to infer a causative relationship between meeting preferences and outcomes, the association between them emphasises the need for further research.’