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# BMJ Open

## Laparoscopically assisted vs open oesophagectomy for patients with oesophageal cancer – the ROMIO (Randomised Oesophagectomy: Minimally Invasive or Open) study: protocol for a randomized controlled trial (RCT)

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# Laparoscopically assisted vs open oesophagectomy for patients with oesophageal cancer – the ROMIO (Randomised Oesophagectomy: Minimally Invasive or Open) study: protocol for a randomized controlled trial (RCT)

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## Abbreviations

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6 AUGIS- Association of Upper Gastro-Intestinal Surgeons  
7 BRTC- Bristol Randomised Trials Collaboration  
8 BTC- Bristol Trials Centre  
9 ConDuCT-II- Collaboration and innovation for Difficult and Complex randomised controlled  
10 Trials In Invasive procedures  
11 CTEU- Clinical Trials and Evaluation Unit  
12 CTU- Clinical Trials Unit  
13 EORTC- European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer  
14 HRQL- health related quality of life  
15 HTA- Health Technology Assessment  
16 ICER- Incremental Cost-Effectiveness Ratio  
17 INMB- Incremental Net Monetary Benefit  
18 LAO- laparoscopically-assisted oesophagectomy  
19 MDT – multidisciplinary team MFI- multidimensional fatigue inventory  
20 MRC- Medical Research Council  
21 NHS- National Health Service  
22 NIHR- National Institute for Health Research  
23 OO- open oesophagectomy  
24 PIL – patient information leaflet  
25 QA- quality assurance  
26 QALY- quality adjusted life years  
27 QLQ- quality of life questionnaire  
28 QRI - QuinteT Recruitment Intervention  
29 RCT- randomised controlled trial  
30 REC- Research Ethics Committee  
31 TMIO- totally minimally invasive oesophagectomy  
32 UK- United Kingdom  
33 UKCRC- UK Clinical Research Collaboration  
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**Abstract: (up to approx. 250 words)**

Introduction: Surgery (oesophagectomy), with neoadjuvant chemo(radio)therapy, is the main curative treatment for patients with oesophageal cancer. Several surgical approaches can be used to remove an oesophageal tumour. The Ivor Lewis (two phase procedure) is usually used in the UK. This can be performed as an open oesophagectomy (OO), a laparoscopically-assisted oesophagectomy (LAO) or a totally minimally invasive oesophagectomy (TMIO). All three are performed in the NHS, with LAO and OO the most common. However, there is limited evidence about which surgical approach is best for patients in terms of survival and post-operative health-related quality of life.

Methods and analysis: We will undertake a UK multicentre randomised controlled trial to compare LAO with OO in adult patients with oesophageal cancer. The primary outcome is patient-reported physical function at 3 and 6 weeks post-operatively and 3 months post-randomisation. Secondary outcomes include: post-operative complications, survival, disease recurrence, other measures of quality of life, spirometry, success of patient blinding and quality assurance measures. A cost-effectiveness analysis will be performed comparing LAO with OO. We will embed a randomised IDEAL phase 2b sub-study to evaluate the safety and evolution of the TMIO procedure and a qualitative recruitment intervention to optimise patient recruitment. We will analyse the primary outcome using a multi-level regression model. Patients will be monitored for up to 3 years after their surgery.

Ethics and dissemination: This study received approval from South-West Frenchay Research Ethics Committee. We will submit the results for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

Trial registration number: ISRCTN10386621



## Article summary

### *Strengths and limitations of this study*

- The ROMIO study will compare laparoscopically-assisted oesophagectomy with open oesophagectomy, which are the procedures most relevant to UK practice.
- We will assess the quality of the surgery, using operative images and pathology.
- The primary outcome (recovery of physical function up to 3 months) considers what matters most to patients about having an oesophagectomy.
- Patients will be blinded to their surgical procedure for 6 days post-operatively (use of large dressings) to achieve an unbiased assessment of pain but it will not be possible to blind patients for the primary outcome.
- ROMIO incorporates a randomised sub-study to collect data on totally minimally invasive oesophagectomy, which is an evolving technique.

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## Introduction:

In the UK, about 8900 people are diagnosed with oesophageal cancer each year and the incidence is increasing [1]. Surgical removal of the oesophagus (oesophagectomy), with or without chemo(radio)therapy, is currently the most commonly recommended treatment for patients whose cancer is confined to the oesophagus and the local lymph nodes and who are fit to undergo major surgery. The objective of treatment is a surgical cure but only about 40 to 50% of patients survive for 3 years or more following treatment [1]. The surgical procedure depends on the location and size of the tumour and individual surgeon choice. There are a number of different surgical approaches used in the NHS, but the most commonly used procedure involves removing the bottom part of the oesophagus and part of the top of the stomach (the two-phase Ivor Lewis oesophagectomy). The remaining stomach is fashioned into a tube and brought up into the chest to replace the removed oesophagus.

In the past 10 years there has been an increase in the use of minimally invasive surgical techniques and, according to the latest Association of Upper Gastro-Intestinal Surgeons (AUGIS) audit, 42% of oesophagectomies were performed using Laparoscopically-Assisted Oesophagectomy (LAO) or Totally Minimally Invasive Oesophagectomy (TMIO)[2]. However, it is uncertain whether laparoscopic surgery improves patient recovery after surgery or has any impact on survival.

Observational studies suggest that TMIO achieves the same survival benefit as Open Oesophagectomy (OO) but with better recovery and reduced rates of post-operative pneumonia [3-5], although the apparent faster recovery may be due to the selection of fitter patients for the minimally invasive procedure. To date, seven randomised controlled trials (RCTs) comparing OO with LAO (n=2) or TMIO (n=4) or robot-assisted TMIO (n=1) have been conducted[6-12]. All had modest sample sizes (26-221 patients) and five out of the seven studies were conducted in a single centre (China = 3, Austria = 1, Netherlands = 1). The studies measured short term primary outcomes such as pulmonary infection (n=2)[7, 9],

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3 post-operative complications (n=4)[6, 10-12] and duration of operation (n=1)[8]. In one RCT,  
4 patients were randomised to a surgeon rather than procedure, meaning the treatment effect  
5 may be influenced by a difference in skill between surgeons choosing LAO and those  
6 choosing OO [11]. All but one of the RCTs[12] were at unclear risk of selection bias, either  
7 due to random sequence generation (n=3) or allocation concealment (n=6). The best  
8 evidence comes from two multicentre RCTs, the MIRO and TIME trials. MIRO randomised  
9 207 participants in twelve French centres. Patients were randomised to OO (n=104) or LAO  
10 (n=103). They compared intra-operative and post-operative complications, classified as  
11 grade 2 or above using Clavien-Dindo, within 30 days. There was a lower incidence of  
12 complications in those allocated to LAO (36%) compared to those allocated to open  
13 oesophagectomy (64%, odds ratio [OR] 0.31, 95% CI 0.18-0.55) However, patients were  
14 randomised using opaque envelopes in theatre after a pre-operative laparoscopic  
15 investigation [10]. The TIME trial, conducted in five European centres, compared TMIO with  
16 OO in 115 patients [7] and reported a 70% reduction in pulmonary infection in the TMIO  
17 group in the first 2 weeks post-operatively (relative risk [RR] 0.30, 95% CI 0.12-0.76).[7]  
18 However, the TMIO procedure is not well-established in the UK.[13]

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41 We are conducting a large, multicentre RCT (the ROMIO trial) to compare the clinical and  
42 cost-effectiveness of LAO vs OO. The trial will provide high quality evidence, relevant to UK  
43 practice, of the risks and benefits of LAO, in terms of recovery, health-related quality of life  
44 (HRQL), cost and survival. Incorporated into the study are:

- 45 • An assessment of the quality of the surgery performed using intra-operative photos  
46 of the procedure and pathology reports[14]
- 47 • An integrated qualitative QuinteT Recruitment Intervention (QRI) to optimise  
48 recruitment[15]

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- A randomised IDEAL 2b sub-study to investigate the safety and technical changes in TMIO[16]

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## Methods and analysis:

We have used the SPIRIT reporting guidelines in this protocol paper.[17]

### Study design

ROMIO is a multicentre randomised controlled trial (RCT) comparing open oesophagectomy (OO) with laparoscopically-assisted oesophagectomy (LAO) in patients with oesophageal cancer. ROMIO will also include a randomised sub-study in two centres to assess the efficacy of TMIO and review safety data, compared with OO and LAO. The sub-study will also document how the technical aspects of TMIO evolve over time and whether the technique 'stabilises' over the course of ROMIO.

### *Entry criteria*

To ensure comparability between centres and surgeons, centres will only be included if they are undertaking at least 50 oesophagectomies per year and have a minimum of two surgeons participating in ROMIO. Surgeons will be assessed (by submitting two unedited anonymised videos) before they will be permitted to enrol their patients for ROMIO. This quality assurance (QA) measure has been described previously.[14]

### *Inclusion criteria*

We will screen all patients undergoing oesophagectomy (with or without neoadjuvant chemo(radio)therapy) in at least eight UK hospitals for eligibility (see Figure 1). We will include patients who are at least 18 years old, with at least adenocarcinoma or squamous cell cancer of the oesophagus or oesophago-gastric junction, who have been referred for oesophagectomy by the multidisciplinary team after neoadjuvant chemotherapy or chemoradiotherapy (any type). Patients will be included if their tumour is localised (has not spread beyond the local lymph nodes), is more than 5 cm below the crico-pharyngeus (the muscle that keeps the oesophagus shut) and involves less than 4 cm of the stomach wall.

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3 Patients will only be included if they have been assessed as fit for surgery and are able to  
4 provide written informed consent.  
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### 7 *Exclusion criteria*

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10 Patients will be excluded if they have high-grade dysplasia or if the cancer has spread  
11 beyond the oesophagus (T4b) or any stage with M1. All patients must be eligible for either  
12 open or minimally invasive surgery and must not be taking part in any other research that  
13 would interfere with the ROMIO protocol.  
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### 18 *Randomisation*

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21 The local research team will take written informed consent from participants. They will then  
22 randomise participants up to 2 weeks before their operation using a secure internet-based  
23 randomisation system. A computer programme will be used to generate the allocation  
24 sequence used for randomisation. Randomisation will be stratified by neoadjuvant treatment  
25 and site. Randomisation within blocks of varying size will prevent large imbalances in the  
26 number of patients in each treatment group. Participants will be randomised to receive either  
27 OO or LAO in a 1:1 ratio (with a varying block size of 6 or 8). In two centres, patients may  
28 also be randomised to receive TMIO, in a 1:1:1 ratio (with a varying block size of 6 or 9).  
29 The surgical team will be informed of the patient allocation after randomisation and before  
30 surgery (see Figure 1).  
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### 47 *Trial interventions*

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50 The intervention being compared in ROMIO is the surgical approach, i.e. whether the  
51 surgeon uses large (OO) or smaller incisions (LAO or TMIO) to perform the operation (see  
52 Figure 2). Internally, the operation being performed is expected to be the same, regardless  
53 of the surgical approach used. Placement of a feeding jejunostomy or naso-jejunal tube will  
54 also be at the surgeon's discretion, as well as the use of intra-abdominal and intra-thoracic  
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3 drains. Details of the surgical technique were established during the feasibility study and as  
4 part of the embedded QA study and are intended to be pragmatic.[14, 18] OO will be  
5 performed using large incisions in both the abdomen and the chest (see Figure 2); the  
6 location and length of incisions are at each surgeon's discretion. LAO will be performed  
7 laparoscopically using 5mm and/or 12mm incisions (as many as needed, according to  
8 surgeon preference) in the abdomen. One large incision will be made in the chest (see  
9 Figure 2). If a feeding jejunostomy tube is placed, this may be performed laparoscopically or  
10 by creating an abdominal incision (no bigger than 8cm). In the two centres participating in  
11 the sub-study, around 33% of patients will have a TMIO. In this approach, the surgeon will  
12 make small incisions in the abdomen and in the chest. For the abdominal part of the  
13 procedure, laparoscopic techniques will be used as described above. The surgeon will  
14 access the thoracic cavity using 12mm and/or 5mm incisions (as many as needed) and  
15 perform the surgery thoracoscopically (see Figure 2).

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33 Procedures to minimise diaphragmatic herniation (where one or more of the abdominal  
34 organs moves into the chest) can be performed at the surgeon's discretion. The  
35 anastomotic technique and methods to close the incisions are at the surgeon's discretion.  
36 Any deviations from the specified procedures must be fully documented and will be reviewed  
37 by the study management group.

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45 All surgical interventions will be carried out under general anaesthesia according to local  
46 hospital protocols. Patients will receive antibiotics and deep vein thrombosis prophylaxis  
47 according to local hospital policies. Co-interventions such as peri-operative analgesia (e.g.  
48 epidural anaesthesia or paravertebral catheters) and monitoring (e.g. central or arterial lines)  
49 will be permitted according to the preferences of each centre.

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58 Participants have the right to discontinue their part in the study at any time. In addition, the  
59 investigator may withdraw the participant from their allocated treatment group if, subsequent  
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3 to randomisation, a clinical reason for not performing the surgical intervention is discovered.  
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5 Participants withdrawn from their allocated intervention but willing to continue completing  
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7 follow-up schedules will be encouraged to do so. All discontinuations and withdrawals will be  
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9 documented.  
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### 11 12 13 *Primary outcome*

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15 The primary outcome is recovery of physical function assessed using the established,  
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17 validated patient-reported European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer  
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19 quality of life questionnaire (EORTC-QLQ-C30) at three and six weeks post-surgery and  
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21 three months after randomisation[19]. This quality of life measure was selected as the key  
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23 benefits of minimally invasive surgical techniques are the potential for less tissue damage  
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25 and consequently less pain and a more rapid recovery of function.[20] Patient groups also  
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27 indicated that quality of life is an outcome that is very important to them.  
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### 31 32 *Secondary outcome measures*

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34 Secondary outcomes will assess the efficacy of the OO and LAO in terms of morbidity,  
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36 survival and safety. Secondary outcomes will include:  
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#### 39 *Survival*

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41 • Overall and disease-free survival for at least 2-years.

#### 42 43 *Complications*

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45 • All-cause short and long-term complications for up to 3 years post-randomisation[21].
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47 • Any complications within 30 days of surgery, as assessed using the Clavien-Dindo  
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49 System.[22]
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51 • Length of hospital stay (defined as length of primary hospital stay plus readmission  
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53 within 30 days / length of primary hospital stay plus length of hospital stay if  
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55 discharged to community hospital).  
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- Forced expiratory volume in one second and forced vital capacity measured by spirometry, measured at baseline and days 3 and 6 post-operatively.

#### *Cost-effectiveness*

- Incremental net monetary benefit of LAO over OO 2 years after surgery.

#### *Quality of life*

- We will measure generic and disease specific aspects of HRQL using the following validated questionnaires at baseline, 6 days, 3 weeks and 6 weeks post-surgery and 3, 6, 9, 12, 18, 24 and, where possible, 36 months post-randomisation:
  - EORTC QLQ-C30[19] – a questionnaire developed to assess the health-related quality of life of cancer patients;
  - EORTC QLQ-OES18[23, 24]– a questionnaire developed to assess the health-related quality of life for oesophageal cancer patients;
  - MFI-20 [25, 26]– a tool widely used to assess fatigue in cancer patients;
  - EuroQOL EQ-5D-5L [27, 28] –a widely used generic quality of life questionnaire.

We will also measure pain pre-operatively and post-operatively at days 3 and 6 using the visual analogue scale (VAS)[29].

#### *Quality assurance*

We will assess QA of surgery (reported previously[14]) using:

- Intra-operative photographs will be taken at key stages throughout each procedure and submitted to the study database for on-going monitoring of the operations. Anonymised images will be reviewed and rated by surgical assessors.
- Histopathological measures assessed by pathologists blinded to the treatment allocation, including length of the oesophagus; total counts of nodes – all and malignant (positive) nodes; details of resection margins and pT staging. The slides of 10% of all cases from each centre will be reviewed by the lead pathologist.
- Success of patient blinding during the first six days post-operatively, assessed using the Bang blinding procedure[30]

1  
2  
3 Outcome data will be collected onto case report forms (unless questionnaires are specified)  
4  
5 and entered onto a study-specific database for data cleaning and analysis.

6  
7 Data about adverse events will be collected and reported in accordance with Sponsor and  
8  
9 regulatory requirements.  
10

### 11 12 13 *Patient and Public Involvement*

14  
15  
16 Patient groups were consulted at the design stage, these feedback from these patient  
17  
18 consultations shaped the primary outcome and other aspects of the study. We have patient  
19  
20 representatives as grant co-applicants and as independent members of the trial steering  
21  
22 committee, in addition to this we will regularly consult patient and public groups about  
23  
24 different aspects of the study as it is ongoing. Patients have provided feedback on the  
25  
26 burden involved in participating in the research.  
27  
28  
29  
30

### 31 32 *Methods used to minimise bias*

33  
34 Patients will be blinded to their treatment allocation by covering all potential incision sites for  
35  
36 all surgical approaches (regardless of the actual operation performed) with large dressings  
37  
38 for the first 6 days post-operatively. On day 6 patients will be asked to complete a booklet  
39  
40 containing all of the quality of life questionnaires (QLQ-C30, OES-18, MFI-20, EQ5D5L) and  
41  
42 a pain assessment using the VAS. Success of blinding will be assessed using the Bang  
43  
44 Blinding Index.[30] Due to the nature of the study intervention, it is not possible to blind  
45  
46 patients for the completion of the quality of life questionnaires at the primary outcome  
47  
48 timepoints. However, patients have not had this surgery before so will not have anything to  
49  
50 compare it to, furthermore, participants in the study are unlikely to have a strong preference  
51  
52 for one approach over another.  
53  
54  
55

56  
57 Pathologists assessing QA of surgery will also be blinded to the randomised allocation. As  
58  
59 the intervention is surgery, there may be variation in surgeon skill or surgical technique. This  
60

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2  
3 will be managed by stratifying the randomisation by centre. Surgical QA is described in more  
4 detail elsewhere.[14]  
5  
6  
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8

9 Loss to follow up will be minimised by maintaining regular contact with patients (by  
10 telephone and post) to complete follow-up questionnaires. No additional visits are required  
11 for the study.  
12  
13  
14  
15

### 16 17 18 19 *Sample size*

20 203 participants in each of the LAO and OO groups will allow a minimum clinically important  
21 difference of 0.4 standard deviations on the primary outcome to be detected with more than  
22 90% power at the 5% significance level, allowing for 15% of participants not following their  
23 allocated procedure, and 10% failing to complete the primary outcome. We anticipate that  
24 approximately 40 additional patients will be randomised to TMIO in the sub-study.  
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34

### 35 *Statistical analysis*

36 The results will be reported according to the CONSORT guidelines, including the extension  
37 for patient reported outcomes.[31] We will analyse the data according to the intention to treat  
38 principle, in that the groups compared will be based on allocated treatment irrespective of  
39 the actual operation that the patient had. Participants missing all three assessments  
40 contributing to the primary outcome measure will not be included in the primary analysis, but  
41 we will use sensitivity analyses to investigate the potential impact of any missing data. We  
42 will adjust analyses for treatment centre, whether the participant underwent neoadjuvant  
43 chemo(radio)therapy and the baseline value of the outcome under comparison. We will  
44 prepare and make publicly available a detailed analysis plan prior to locking the database.  
45  
46  
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56 The primary outcome measure (difference between LAO and OO treatment groups) will be  
57 the reported difference in mean EORTC-QLQ-C30 scores for recovery of physical function  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 (with 95% confidence interval and p-value). The difference in mean scores will be estimated  
4  
5 as the co-efficient of a binary variable distinguishing the two treatment groups, in a multi-  
6  
7 level regression model, with covariates as detailed. This analysis will be conducted  
8  
9 separately for data from the feasibility and main trials, and the two treatment effect estimates  
10  
11 pooled as a weighted average. The same approach will be adapted to the assessment of  
12  
13 pain during the six days post-operatively and other measures of HRQL.  
14  
15

16 In addition, we will compare post-operative length of stay and accommodate the skewed  
17  
18 distribution of this measure by a log-transformed analysis model presenting ratios of  
19  
20 geometric means, 95% confidence interval and p-value.  
21  
22

23 We will present frequencies of the key treatment complications by treatment allocation.  
24  
25 Severity of treatment complications will be compared between allocated treatment groups by  
26  
27 scoring each patient according to their most severe Clavien-Dindo category and estimating  
28  
29 the difference as an odds ratio using ordered logistic regression.  
30  
31

32 We will use proportional hazards regression to estimate the treatment difference in overall  
33  
34 and disease-free survival. A Kaplan-Meier plot will present survival over time in the OO and  
35  
36 LAO groups.  
37  
38

### 39 *Subgroup analyses*

40  
41  
42 A sub-group analysis will investigate whether the relative effects of OO and LAO differ  
43  
44 according to whether a participant underwent neoadjuvant chemotherapy /  
45  
46 chemoradiotherapy beforehand.  
47  
48

### 49 *Analysis of the nested IDEAL 2b study*

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51  
52 Data about the TMIO group will be collected and reported separately to the comparison  
53  
54 between the OO and LAO groups. We will document the inclusion / exclusion of patients for  
55  
56 the TMIO procedure and any reasons for not performing the TMIO operation according to  
57  
58 the randomised allocation. We will document the complications of TMIO and perform some  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 analyses of safety and adverse events compared with the OO and LAO groups. We will  
4 document the evolution of the technical aspects of this procedure according to the IDEAL 2b  
5 framework.  
6  
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9

### 10 *Cost-effectiveness analysis*

11  
12 We will convert EQ-5D-5L [18, 19] responses to utilities using the NICE-recommended UK  
13 tariff at the time of analysis.[32] These will be combined with survival data to calculate  
14 QALYs, adjusted for differences in baseline EQ-5D utility scores.[33] We will estimate  
15 theatre costs by collecting detailed information on equipment used and staff time (e.g.  
16 surgeons, anaesthetist, scrub nurse). We will collect information on intensive care resource  
17 use and re-interventions during the initial hospital stay. We will also collect and analyse data  
18 on health care resources used in subsequent inpatient stays, outpatient visits, general  
19 practitioner visits and other community health services. We will use nationally available unit  
20 costs to value resource use where available.  
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35 We will perform the cost-effectiveness analysis on an intention to treat basis from both an  
36 NHS perspective, and a wider personal and social care perspective. We will estimate the  
37 cost-effectiveness of LAO compared with OO by calculating the Incremental Net Monetary  
38 Benefit (INMB) and, if appropriate, the Incremental Cost-Effectiveness Ratio (ICER). We will  
39 present uncertainty in these estimates using a cost-effectiveness acceptability curve and/or  
40 cost-effectiveness ellipses. We will perform cost analyses at 3 and 24 months post-  
41 randomisation. At 24 months, we will discount the cost estimates at the rate recommended  
42 by HM Treasury at the time of analysis.[34] We will conduct one-way sensitivity analyses  
43 including varying the discount rate. Where appropriate, we will use simple or multiple  
44 imputation techniques for missing data.  
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### 57 **Ethics and dissemination:**

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3 All study interventions are already routinely used in the NHS. This study has been reviewed  
4 and given favourable opinion by the South West - Frenchay Research Ethics Committee on  
5 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016 (REC, study ref: 184167). We will disseminate the findings by usual  
6 academic channels, i.e. presentation at international meetings and peer-reviewed  
7 publications. We will write a full report for the funder on the completion of the study and we  
8 will provide a lay summary of the results to patient organisations.  
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### 18 *Study progress*

19  
20 Recruitment started in October 2016 and we have recruited 277 patients, with an additional  
21 32 TMIO patients (correct on 03 Apr 2019). We have agreed with the funder to continue  
22 recruitment until September 2019, beyond the planned completion of recruitment in  
23 November 2018. We will also include approximately 120 patients recruited to the feasibility  
24 study, having secured permission to continue recruitment to that study whilst the main trial  
25 was being set up.  
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### 35 *Major changes to the study protocol*

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37 Since the first study protocol was approved by the REC (the current version is v7.0, 25  
38 October 2018), we have made the following changes:  
39

- 40  
41 • We updated the expected adverse events section to reflect the results of an  
42 international consensus paper on standardising reporting of complications of  
43 oesophagectomy[21] and to clarify that we will not collect events related to  
44 chemotherapy.  
45  
46  
47  
48
- 49 • We included information about plans to link with external registries (Intensive Care  
50 National Audit Research Centre, Public Health England, Information Services  
51 Division) to obtain more detailed data about ROMIO patient care in hospitals, for the  
52 purpose of economic analysis and to capture information on acute post-operative  
53 complications and recovery.  
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### **Figure legends**

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2  
3 Figure 1 CONSORT diagram outline (MDT: multi-disciplinary team; PIL: patient information  
4 leaflet; MIO: minimally invasive oesophagectomy; LAO: laparoscopically-assisted  
5 oesophagectomy; OO: open oesophagectomy)  
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7 Figure 2 Diagrams representing the incisions the surgeon may make for the three different  
8 surgical approaches  
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For peer review only

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### Author contributions:

All authors critically revised manuscript for important intellectual content and approved the manuscript.

- Rachel C Brierley developed the study design and aims, drafted the protocol and initiated the study, drafted the manuscript and oversaw study conduct and acquisition of data.

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4 initiated the study. DMG also oversaw statistical aspects and analyses for the study.  
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10 the study design and aims, drafted the protocol and initiated the study. CM also  
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- 44 clinical aspects of the study, oversaw the embedded quality assurance study and
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26 Leeds, England).  
27  
28

29  
30 Data Monitoring Committee membership: Judith Bliss (Chair, Professor of Clinical  
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32 Upper Gastrointestinal Surgeon, Beaumont Hospital & Royal College of Surgeons in  
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34 Surgeons and emeritus Professor of Surgery, University of Birmingham,  
35 Birmingham, England).  
36

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38  
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41  
42

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49

50  
51 This study was designed and delivered in collaboration with the Clinical Trials and  
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53 both are UKCRC registered clinical trials units, which are known collectively as the  
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57

58 Department of Health Disclaimer:  
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3 The views and opinions expressed therein are those of the authors and do not  
4 necessarily reflect those of the HTA programme, NIHR, NHS or the Department of  
5 Health.  
6

7  
8 The funder and Sponsors approve any amendments to the study but have no direct  
9 involvement in study design; collection, management, analysis, and interpretation of  
10 data; writing of the report; and the decision to submit this report for publication.  
11

## 12 **Competing interests statement**

13  
14 No competing interests are declared  
15

## 16 **Data Sharing**

17  
18 Data will not be made available for sharing until after publication of the main results of the  
19 research. Thereafter, anonymised individual patient data will be made available for  
20 secondary research, conditional on assurance from the secondary researcher that the  
21 proposed use of the data is compliant with the MRC Policy on Data Preservation and  
22 Sharing regarding scientific quality, ethical requirements and value for money. A minimum  
23 requirement with respect to scientific quality will be a publicly available pre-specified protocol  
24 describing the purpose, methods and analysis of the secondary research, e.g. a protocol for  
25 a Cochrane systematic review. The second file containing patient identifiers would be made  
26 available for record linkage or a similar purpose, subject to confirmation that the secondary  
27 research protocol has been approved by a UK REC or other similar, approved ethics review  
28 body.  
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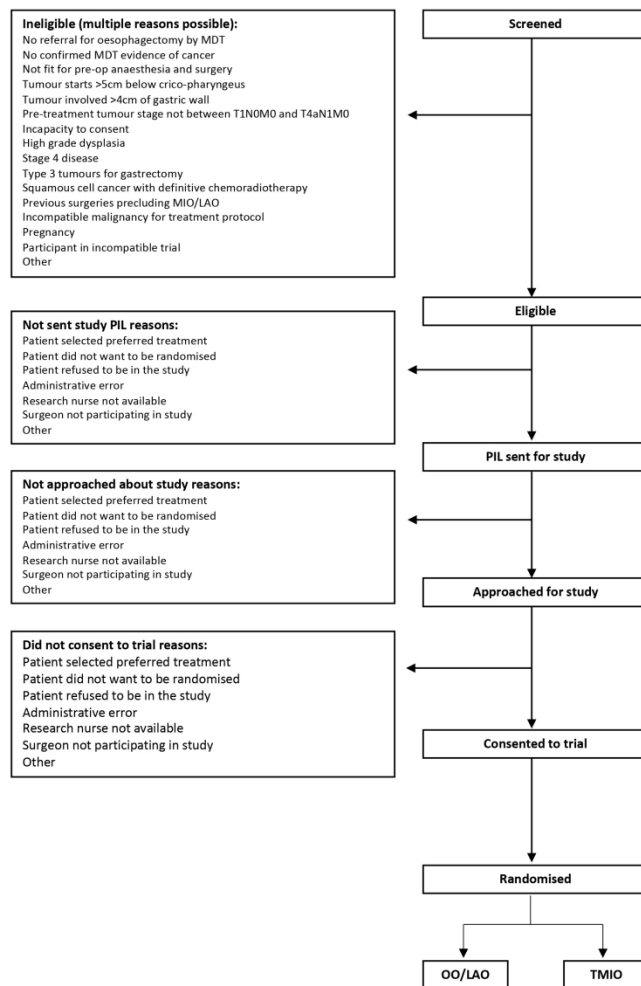
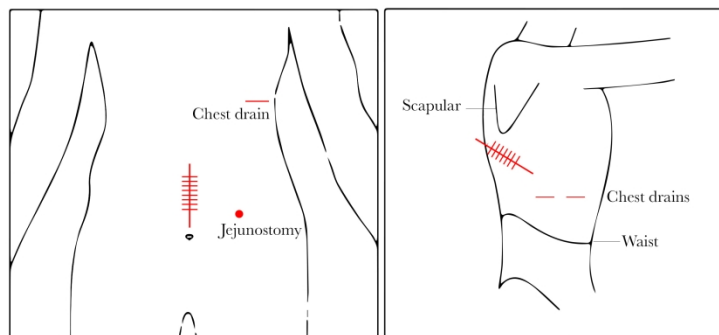


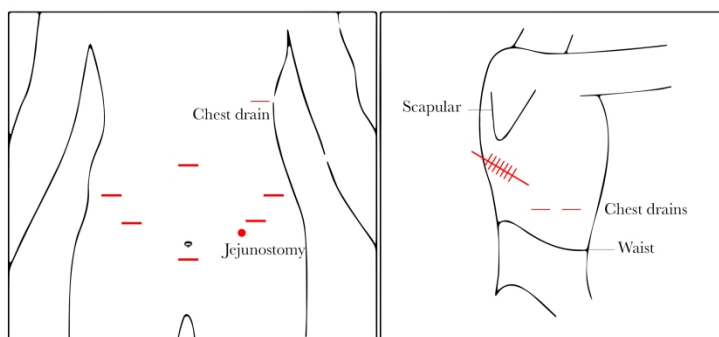
Figure 1 CONSORT diagram outline (MDT: multi-disciplinary team; PIL: patient information leaflet; MIO: minimally invasive oesophagectomy; LAO: laparoscopically-assisted oesophagectomy; OO: open oesophagectomy)

Figure 1 CONSORT diagram outline (MDT: multi-disciplinary team; PIL: patient information leaflet; MIO: minimally invasive oesophagectomy; LAO: laparoscopically-assisted oesophagectomy; OO: open oesophagectomy)

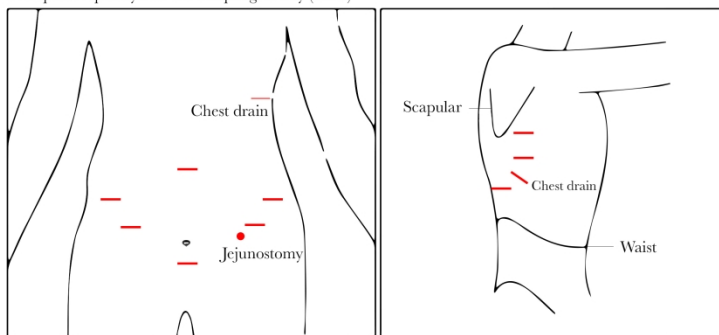
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A. Open oesophagectomy (OO)



B. Laparoscopically assisted oesophagectomy (LAO)



C. Totally minimally invasive oesophagectomy (TMIO)

Figure 2 Diagrams representing the incisions the surgeon may make for the three different surgical approaches

Figure 2 Diagrams representing the incisions the surgeon may make for the three different surgical approaches

293x358mm (300 x 300 DPI)

# Reporting checklist for protocol of a clinical trial.

Based on the SPIRIT guidelines.

## Instructions to authors

Complete this checklist by entering the page numbers from your manuscript where readers will find each of the items listed below.

Your article may not currently address all the items on the checklist. Please modify your text to include the missing information. If you are certain that an item does not apply, please write "n/a" and provide a short explanation.

Upload your completed checklist as an extra file when you submit to a journal.

In your methods section, say that you used the SPIRIT reporting guidelines, and cite them as:

Chan A-W, Tetzlaff JM, Altman DG, Laupacis A, Gøtzsche PC, Krleža-Jerić K, Hróbjartsson A, Mann H, Dickersin K, Berlin J, Doré C, Parulekar W, Summerskill W, Groves T, Schulz K, Sox H, Rockhold FW, Rennie D, Moher D. SPIRIT 2013 Statement: Defining standard protocol items for clinical trials. *Ann Intern Med.* 2013;158(3):200-207

		Reporting Item	Page Number
Title	<a href="#">#1</a>	Descriptive title identifying the study design, population, interventions, and, if applicable, trial acronym	1
Trial registration	<a href="#">#2a</a>	Trial identifier and registry name. If not yet registered, name of intended registry	4
Trial registration: data set	<a href="#">#2b</a>	All items from the World Health Organization Trial Registration Data Set	All relevant information is included throughout the paper.
Protocol version	<a href="#">#3</a>	Date and version identifier	17
Funding	<a href="#">#4</a>	Sources and types of financial, material, and other support	21-22
Roles and responsibilities: contributorship	<a href="#">#5a</a>	Names, affiliations, and roles of protocol contributors	1-2, 20-21

1	Roles and	<a href="#">#5b</a>	Name and contact information for the trial	21
2	responsibilities:		sponsor	
3	sponsor contact			
4	information			
5				
6				
7	Roles and	<a href="#">#5c</a>	Role of study sponsor and funders, if any, in	22
8	responsibilities:		study design; collection, management,	
9	sponsor and		analysis, and interpretation of data; writing of	
10	funder		the report; and the decision to submit the	
11			report for publication, including whether they	
12			will have ultimate authority over any of these	
13			activities	
14				
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19	Roles and	<a href="#">#5d</a>	Composition, roles, and responsibilities of the	21
20	responsibilities:		coordinating centre, steering committee,	
21	committees		endpoint adjudication committee, data	
22			management team, and other individuals or	
23			groups overseeing the trial, if applicable (see	
24			Item 21a for data monitoring committee)	
25				
26				
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28				
29	Background and	<a href="#">#6a</a>	Description of research question and	6-7
30	rationale		justification for undertaking the trial, including	
31			summary of relevant studies (published and	
32			unpublished) examining benefits and harms	
33			for each intervention	
34				
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37	Background and	<a href="#">#6b</a>	Explanation for choice of comparators	6-7
38	rationale: choice of			
39	comparators			
40				
41				
42	Objectives	<a href="#">#7</a>	Specific objectives or hypotheses	7
43				
44				
45	Trial design	<a href="#">#8</a>	Description of trial design including type of	9
46			trial (eg, parallel group, crossover, factorial,	
47			single group), allocation ratio, and framework	
48			(eg, superiority, equivalence, non-inferiority,	
49			exploratory)	
50				
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52				
53	Study setting	<a href="#">#9</a>	Description of study settings (eg, community	21
54			clinic, academic hospital) and list of countries	
55			where data will be collected. Reference to	
56			where list of study sites can be obtained	
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1	Eligibility criteria	<a href="#">#10</a>	Inclusion and exclusion criteria for participants. If applicable, eligibility criteria for study centres and individuals who will perform the interventions (eg, surgeons, psychotherapists)	9-10
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9	Interventions: description	<a href="#">#11a</a>	Interventions for each group with sufficient detail to allow replication, including how and when they will be administered	10-11
10				
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14	Interventions: modifications	<a href="#">#11b</a>	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)	11
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23	Interventions: adherence	<a href="#">#11c</a>	Strategies to improve adherence to intervention protocols, and any procedures for monitoring adherence (eg, drug tablet return; laboratory tests)	n/a- ROMIO is a pragmatic trial
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30	Interventions: concomitant care	<a href="#">#11d</a>	Relevant concomitant care and interventions that are permitted or prohibited during the trial	10 (otherwise n/a as ROMIO is a pragmatic trial)
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35	Outcomes	<a href="#">#12</a>	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	12-13
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49	Participant timeline	<a href="#">#13</a>	Time schedule of enrolment, interventions (including any run-ins and washouts), assessments, and visits for participants. A schematic diagram is highly recommended (see Figure)	10, 12-13
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1	Sample size	<a href="#">#14</a>	Estimated number of participants needed to achieve study objectives and how it was determined, including clinical and statistical assumptions supporting any sample size calculations	14
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9	Recruitment	<a href="#">#15</a>	Strategies for achieving adequate participant enrolment to reach target sample size	Not included here
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13	Allocation: sequence generation	<a href="#">#16a</a>	Method of generating the allocation sequence (eg, computer-generated random numbers), and list of any factors for stratification. 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	10
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26	Allocation concealment mechanism	<a href="#">#16b</a>	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	10
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34	Allocation: implementation	<a href="#">#16c</a>	Who will generate the allocation sequence, who will enrol participants, and who will assign participants to interventions	10
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39	Blinding (masking)	<a href="#">#17a</a>	Who will be blinded after assignment to interventions (eg, trial participants, care providers, outcome assessors, data analysts), and how	13
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46	Blinding (masking): emergency unblinding	<a href="#">#17b</a>	If blinded, circumstances under which unblinding is permissible, and procedure for revealing a participant's allocated intervention during the trial	N/A –pathologists are blinded. Patients are blinded until a week after surgery, success of patient blinding is assessed.
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56	Data collection plan	<a href="#">#18a</a>	Plans for assessment and collection of outcome, baseline, and other trial data,	12-13
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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

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13	Data collection	<a href="#">#18b</a>	Plans to promote participant retention and
14	plan: retention		complete follow-up, including list of any
15			outcome data to be collected for participants
16			who discontinue or deviate from intervention
17			protocols
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21	Data management	<a href="#">#19</a>	Plans for data entry, coding, security, and
22			storage, including any related processes to
23			promote data quality (eg, double data entry;
24			range checks for data values). Reference to
25			where details of data management
26			procedures can be found, if not in the protocol
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31	Statistics:	<a href="#">#20a</a>	Statistical methods for analysing primary and
32	outcomes		secondary outcomes. Reference to where
33			other details of the statistical analysis plan
34			can be found, if not in the protocol
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38	Statistics:	<a href="#">#20b</a>	Methods for any additional analyses (eg,
39	additional analyses		subgroup and adjusted analyses)
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42	Statistics: analysis	<a href="#">#20c</a>	Definition of analysis population relating to
43	population and		protocol non-adherence (eg, as randomised
44	missing data		analysis), and any statistical methods to
45			handle missing data (eg, multiple imputation)
46			
47			
48	Data monitoring:	<a href="#">#21a</a>	Composition of data monitoring committee
49	formal committee		(DMC); summary of its role and reporting
50			structure; statement of whether it is
51			independent from the sponsor and competing
52			interests; and reference to where further
53			details about its charter can be found, if not in
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		the protocol. Alternatively, an explanation of why a DMC is not needed	
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4	Data monitoring: interim analysis	<a href="#">#21b</a> Description of any interim analyses and stopping guidelines, including who will have access to these interim results and make the final decision to terminate the trial	n/a – no interim analyses planned
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10	Harms	<a href="#">#22</a> Plans for collecting, assessing, reporting, and managing solicited and spontaneously reported adverse events and other unintended effects of trial interventions or trial conduct	14
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19	Auditing	<a href="#">#23</a> Frequency and procedures for auditing trial conduct, if any, and whether the process will be independent from investigators and the sponsor	11
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26	Research ethics approval	<a href="#">#24</a> Plans for seeking research ethics committee / institutional review board (REC / IRB) approval	17
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31	Protocol amendments	<a href="#">#25</a> 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)	17-18
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41	Consent or assent	<a href="#">#26a</a> Who will obtain informed consent or assent from potential trial participants or authorised surrogates, and how (see Item 32)	10
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46	Consent or assent: ancillary studies	<a href="#">#26b</a> Additional consent provisions for collection and use of participant data and biological specimens in ancillary studies, if applicable	n/a
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51	Confidentiality	<a href="#">#27</a> 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	21
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1	Declaration of	<a href="#">#28</a>	Financial and other competing interests for	22
2	interests		principal investigators for the overall trial and	
3			each study site	
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6	Data access	<a href="#">#29</a>	Statement of who will have access to the final	22
7			trial dataset, and disclosure of contractual	
8			agreements that limit such access for	
9			investigators	
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13	Ancillary and post	<a href="#">#30</a>	Provisions, if any, for ancillary and post-trial	N/A
14	trial care		care, and for compensation to those who	
15			suffer harm from trial participation	
16				
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18	Dissemination	<a href="#">#31a</a>	Plans for investigators and sponsor to	17
19	policy: trial results		communicate trial results to participants,	
20			healthcare professionals, the public, and	
21			other relevant groups (eg, via publication,	
22			reporting in results databases, or other data	
23			sharing arrangements), including any	
24			publication restrictions	
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30	Dissemination	<a href="#">#31b</a>	Authorship eligibility guidelines and any	n/a
31	policy: authorship		intended use of professional writers	
32				
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34	Dissemination	<a href="#">#31c</a>	Plans, if any, for granting public access to the	The protocol is
35	policy:		full protocol, participant-level dataset, and	publically available on
36	reproducible		statistical code	the NIHR website
37	research			
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40	Informed consent	<a href="#">#32</a>	Model consent form and other related	Available on request
41	materials		documentation given to participants and	
42			authorised surrogates	
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46	Biological	<a href="#">#33</a>	Plans for collection, laboratory evaluation,	N/A
47	specimens		and storage of biological specimens for	
48			genetic or molecular analysis in the current	
49			trial and for future use in ancillary studies, if	
50			applicable	
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# BMJ Open

## Laparoscopically assisted vs open oesophagectomy for patients with oesophageal cancer – the ROMIO (Randomised Oesophagectomy: Minimally Invasive or Open) study: protocol for a randomized controlled trial (RCT)

Journal:	<i>BMJ Open</i>
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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49	<p>Culliford, Lucy; University of Bristol, Bristol Heart Institute, Rogers, Chris; university of bristol, Clinical Science South Bristol          Howes, Ben; University of Bristol, Anesthetics          Chalmers, Katy; University of Bristol          Cousins, Sian; University of Bristol, Population Health Sciences          Elliott, Jackie          Donovan, Jenny; University of Bristol          Heys, Rachael; University of Bristol          Wickens, Robin; University of Bristol          wilkerson, paul; University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust          Hollowood, Andrew; University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust          streets, christopher; University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust          titcomb, dan; University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust          humphreys, lee; Derriford Hospital, Upper GI Surgery          wheatley, tim; Derriford Hospital, Upper GI Surgery          sanders, Grant; Derriford Hospital, Upper GI Surgery          ariyathenam, arun; Derriford Hospital, Upper GI Surgery          kelly, jamie; University Hospital Southampton, Division of Surgery, University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust, Tremona Road, Southampton, Hampshire, SO16 6YD          noble, fergus; University Hospital Southampton, Division of Surgery, University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust, Tremona Road, Southampton, Hampshire, SO16 6YD          couper, graeme; Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, General Surgery Department          skipworth, richard; Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, General Surgery Department          deans, chris; Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, General Surgery Department          ubhi, sukhbir; Leicester Royal Infirmary          Williams, R; Leicester Royal Infirmary          bowrey, david; Leicester Royal Infirmary          exon, david; Leicester Royal Infirmary          turner, paul; Royal Preston Hospital          daya shetty, vinutha; Royal Preston Hospital          chaparala, ram; Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust          akhtar, khurshid; Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust          farooq, naheed; Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust          Parsons, Simon; Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust, Department of General Surgery          welch, neil; Nottingham City Hospital          Houlihan, Rebecca; University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust          Smith, Jo; Derriford Hospital, Upper GI Surgery          Schranz, Rachel; University Hospital Southampton, Division of Surgery, University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust, Tremona Road, Southampton, Hampshire, SO16 6YD          rea, nicola; Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, General Surgery Department          cooke, jill; Leicester Royal Infirmary          williams, alexandra; Royal Preston Hospital          hindmarsh, Carolyn; Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust          maitland, sally; Nottingham City Hospital          howie, lucy; Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust          Barham, C; University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust, Division of Surgery</p>
50 51	<p>&lt;b&gt;Primary Subject Heading&lt;/b&gt;: Surgery</p>
52 53	<p>Secondary Subject Heading: Health services research</p>
54 55 56 57 58 59 60	<p>Keywords: oesophageal cancer, oesophagectomy, quality of life, randomised controlled trial, minimally invasive oesophagectomy</p>



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# Laparoscopically assisted vs open oesophagectomy for patients with oesophageal cancer – the ROMIO (Randomised Oesophagectomy: Minimally Invasive or Open) study: protocol for a randomized controlled trial (RCT)

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## Abbreviations

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6 AUGIS- Association of Upper Gastro-Intestinal Surgeons  
7 BRTC- Bristol Randomised Trials Collaboration  
8 BTC- Bristol Trials Centre  
9 ConDuCT-II- Collaboration and innovation for Difficult and Complex randomised controlled  
10 Trials In Invasive procedures  
11 CTEU- Clinical Trials and Evaluation Unit  
12 CTU- Clinical Trials Unit  
13 EORTC- European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer  
14 HRQL- health related quality of life  
15 HTA- Health Technology Assessment  
16 ICER- Incremental Cost-Effectiveness Ratio  
17 INMB- Incremental Net Monetary Benefit  
18 LAO- laparoscopically-assisted oesophagectomy  
19 MDT – multidisciplinary team MFI- multidimensional fatigue inventory  
20 MRC- Medical Research Council  
21 NHS- National Health Service  
22 NIHR- National Institute for Health Research  
23 OO- open oesophagectomy  
24 PIL – patient information leaflet  
25 QA- quality assurance  
26 QALY- quality adjusted life years  
27 QLQ- quality of life questionnaire  
28 QRI - QuinteT Recruitment Intervention  
29 RCT- randomised controlled trial  
30 REC- Research Ethics Committee  
31 TMIO- totally minimally invasive oesophagectomy  
32 UK- United Kingdom  
33 UKCRC- UK Clinical Research Collaboration  
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**Abstract: (up to approx. 250 words)**

Introduction: Surgery (oesophagectomy), with neoadjuvant chemo(radio)therapy, is the main curative treatment for patients with oesophageal cancer. Several surgical approaches can be used to remove an oesophageal tumour. The Ivor Lewis (two phase procedure) is usually used in the UK. This can be performed as an open oesophagectomy (OO), a laparoscopically-assisted oesophagectomy (LAO) or a totally minimally invasive oesophagectomy (TMIO). All three are performed in the NHS, with LAO and OO the most common. However, there is limited evidence about which surgical approach is best for patients in terms of survival and post-operative health-related quality of life.

Methods and analysis: We will undertake a UK multicentre randomised controlled trial to compare LAO with OO in adult patients with oesophageal cancer. The primary outcome is patient-reported physical function at 3 and 6 weeks post-operatively and 3 months post-randomisation. Secondary outcomes include: post-operative complications, survival, disease recurrence, other measures of quality of life, spirometry, success of patient blinding and quality assurance measures. A cost-effectiveness analysis will be performed comparing LAO with OO. We will embed a randomised IDEAL phase 2b sub-study to evaluate the safety and evolution of the TMIO procedure and a qualitative recruitment intervention to optimise patient recruitment. We will analyse the primary outcome using a multi-level regression model. Patients will be monitored for up to 3 years after their surgery.

Ethics and dissemination: This study received approval from South-West Frenchay Research Ethics Committee. We will submit the results for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

Trial registration number: ISRCTN10386621



## Article summary

### *Strengths and limitations of this study*

- The ROMIO study will compare laparoscopically-assisted oesophagectomy with open oesophagectomy, which are the procedures most relevant to UK practice.
- We will assess the quality of the surgery, using operative images and pathology.
- The primary outcome (recovery of physical function up to 3 months) considers what matters most to patients about having an oesophagectomy.
- Patients will be blinded to their surgical procedure for 6 days post-operatively (use of large dressings) to achieve an unbiased assessment of pain but it will not be possible to blind patients for the primary outcome.
- ROMIO incorporates a randomised sub-study to collect data on totally minimally invasive oesophagectomy, which is an evolving technique.

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## Introduction:

In the UK, about 8900 people are diagnosed with oesophageal cancer each year and the incidence is increasing [1]. Surgical removal of the oesophagus (oesophagectomy), with or without chemo(radio)therapy, is currently the most commonly recommended treatment for patients whose cancer is confined to the oesophagus and the local lymph nodes and who are fit to undergo major surgery. The objective of treatment is a surgical cure but only about 40 to 50% of patients survive for 3 years or more following treatment [1]. The surgical procedure depends on the location and size of the tumour and individual surgeon choice. There are a number of different surgical approaches used in the NHS, but the most commonly used procedure involves removing the bottom part of the oesophagus and part of the top of the stomach (the two-phase Ivor Lewis oesophagectomy). The remaining stomach is fashioned into a tube and brought up into the chest to replace the removed oesophagus.

In the past 10 years there has been an increase in the use of minimally invasive surgical techniques and, according to the latest Association of Upper Gastro-Intestinal Surgeons (AUGIS) audit, 42% of oesophagectomies were performed using Laparoscopically-Assisted Oesophagectomy (LAO) or Totally Minimally Invasive Oesophagectomy (TMIO)[2]. However, it is uncertain whether laparoscopic surgery improves patient recovery after surgery or has any impact on survival.

Observational studies suggest that TMIO achieves the same survival benefit as Open Oesophagectomy (OO) but with better recovery and reduced rates of post-operative pneumonia [3-5], although the apparent faster recovery may be due to the selection of fitter patients for the minimally invasive procedure. To date, seven randomised controlled trials (RCTs) comparing OO with LAO (n=2) or TMIO (n=4) or robot-assisted TMIO (n=1) have been conducted[6-12]. All had modest sample sizes (26-221 patients) and five out of the seven studies were conducted in a single centre (China = 3, Austria = 1, Netherlands = 1). The studies measured short term primary outcomes such as pulmonary infection (n=2)[7, 9],

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3 post-operative complications (n=4)[6, 10-12] and duration of operation (n=1)[8]. In one RCT,  
4 patients were randomised to a surgeon rather than procedure, meaning the treatment effect  
5 may be influenced by a difference in skill between surgeons choosing LAO and those  
6 choosing OO [11]. All but one of the RCTs[12] were at unclear risk of selection bias, either  
7 due to random sequence generation (n=3) or allocation concealment (n=6). The best  
8 evidence comes from two multicentre RCTs, the MIRO and TIME trials. MIRO randomised  
9 207 participants in twelve French centres. Patients were randomised to OO (n=104) or LAO  
10 (n=103). They compared intra-operative and post-operative complications, classified as  
11 grade 2 or above using Clavien-Dindo, within 30 days. There was a lower incidence of  
12 complications in those allocated to LAO (36%) compared to those allocated to open  
13 oesophagectomy (64%, odds ratio [OR] 0.31, 95% CI 0.18-0.55) However, patients were  
14 randomised using opaque envelopes in theatre after a pre-operative laparoscopic  
15 investigation [10]. The TIME trial, conducted in five European centres, compared TMIO with  
16 OO in 115 patients [7] and reported a 70% reduction in pulmonary infection in the TMIO  
17 group in the first 2 weeks post-operatively (relative risk [RR] 0.30, 95% CI 0.12-0.76).[7]  
18 However, the TMIO procedure is not well-established in the UK.[13]

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41 We are conducting a large, multicentre RCT (the ROMIO trial) to compare the clinical and  
42 cost-effectiveness of LAO vs OO. The trial will provide high quality evidence, relevant to UK  
43 practice, of the risks and benefits of LAO, in terms of recovery, health-related quality of life  
44 (HRQL), cost and survival. Incorporated into the study are:

- 45 • An assessment of the quality of the surgery performed using intra-operative photos  
46 of the procedure and pathology reports[14]
- 47 • An integrated qualitative QuinteT Recruitment Intervention (QRI) to optimise  
48 recruitment[15]

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- A randomised IDEAL 2b sub-study to investigate the safety and technical changes in TMIO[16]

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## Methods and analysis:

We have used the SPIRIT reporting guidelines in this protocol paper.[17]

### Study design

ROMIO is a multicentre randomised controlled trial (RCT) comparing open oesophagectomy (OO) with laparoscopically-assisted oesophagectomy (LAO) in patients with oesophageal cancer. ROMIO will also include a randomised sub-study in two centres to assess the efficacy of TMIO and review safety data, compared with OO and LAO. The sub-study will also document how the technical aspects of TMIO evolve over time and whether the technique 'stabilises' over the course of ROMIO.

### *Entry criteria*

To ensure comparability between centres and surgeons, centres will only be included if they are undertaking at least 50 oesophagectomies per year and have a minimum of two surgeons participating in ROMIO. Surgeons will be assessed (by electronically submitting two unedited anonymised videos to the ROMIO study imaging team) before they will be permitted to enrol their patients for ROMIO. Further details about this quality assurance (QA) measure has been described previously.[14]

### *Inclusion criteria*

We will screen all patients undergoing oesophagectomy (with or without neoadjuvant chemo(radio)therapy) in at least eight UK hospitals for eligibility (see Figure 1). We will include patients who are at least 18 years old, with at least adenocarcinoma or squamous cell cancer of the oesophagus or oesophago-gastric junction, who have been referred for oesophagectomy by the multidisciplinary team after neoadjuvant chemotherapy or chemoradiotherapy (any type). Patients will be included if their tumour is localised (has not spread beyond the local lymph nodes), is more than 5 cm below the crico-pharyngeus (the muscle that keeps the oesophagus shut) and involves less than 4 cm of the stomach wall.

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3 Patients will only be included if they have been assessed as fit for surgery and are able to  
4 provide written informed consent.  
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### 7 8 *Exclusion criteria* 9

10 Patients will be excluded if they have high-grade dysplasia or if the cancer has spread  
11 beyond the oesophagus (T4b) or any stage with M1. All patients must be eligible for either  
12 open or minimally invasive surgery and must not be taking part in any other research that  
13 would interfere with the ROMIO protocol.  
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### 18 19 20 21 *Randomisation* 22

23 The local research team will take written informed consent from participants. They will then  
24 randomise participants up to 2 weeks before their operation using a secure internet-based  
25 randomisation system. A computer programme will be used to generate the allocation  
26 sequence used for randomisation. Randomisation will be stratified by neoadjuvant treatment  
27 and site. Randomisation within blocks of varying size will prevent large imbalances in the  
28 number of patients in each treatment group. Participants will be randomised to receive either  
29 OO or LAO in a 1:1 ratio (with a varying block size of 6 or 8). In two centres, patients may  
30 also be randomised to receive TMIO, in a 1:1:1 ratio (with a varying block size of 6 or 9).  
31 The surgical team will be informed of the patient allocation after randomisation and before  
32 surgery (see Figure 1).  
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### 47 48 49 50 *Trial interventions* 51

52 The intervention being compared in ROMIO is the surgical approach, i.e. whether the  
53 surgeon uses large (OO) or smaller incisions (LAO or TMIO) to perform the operation (see  
54 Figure 2). Internally, the operation being performed is expected to be the same, regardless  
55 of the surgical approach used. Placement of a feeding jejunostomy or naso-jejunal tube will  
56 also at the surgeon's discretion, as well as the use of intra-abdominal and intra-thoracic  
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3 drains. Details of the surgical technique were established during the feasibility study and as  
4 part of the embedded QA study and are intended to be pragmatic.[14, 18] OO will be  
5 performed using large incisions in both the abdomen and the chest (see Figure 2); the  
6 location and length of incisions are at each surgeon's discretion. LAO will be performed  
7 laparoscopically using 5mm and/or 12mm incisions (as many as needed, according to  
8 surgeon preference) in the abdomen. One large incision will be made in the chest (see  
9 Figure 2). If a feeding jejunostomy tube is placed, this may be performed laparoscopically or  
10 by creating an abdominal incision (no bigger than 8cm). In the two centres participating in  
11 the sub-study, around 33% of patients will have a TMIO. In this approach, the surgeon will  
12 make small incisions in the abdomen and in the chest. For the abdominal part of the  
13 procedure, laparoscopic techniques will be used as described above. The surgeon will  
14 access the thoracic cavity using 12mm and/or 5mm incisions (as many as needed) and  
15 perform the surgery thoracoscopically (see Figure 2).

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33 Procedures to minimise diaphragmatic herniation (where one or more of the abdominal  
34 organs moves into the chest) can be performed at the surgeon's discretion. The  
35 anastomotic technique and methods to close the incisions are at the surgeon's discretion.  
36 Any deviations from the specified procedures must be fully documented and will be reviewed  
37 by the study management group.

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45 All surgical interventions will be carried out under general anaesthesia according to local  
46 hospital protocols. Patients will receive antibiotics and deep vein thrombosis prophylaxis  
47 according to local hospital policies. Co-interventions such as peri-operative analgesia (e.g.  
48 epidural anaesthesia or paravertebral catheters) and monitoring (e.g. central or arterial lines)  
49 will be permitted according to the preferences of each centre.

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58 Participants have the right to discontinue their part in the study at any time. In addition, the  
59 investigator may withdraw the participant from their allocated treatment group if, subsequent  
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3 to randomisation, a clinical reason for not performing the surgical intervention is discovered.  
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5 Participants withdrawn from their allocated intervention but willing to continue completing  
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7 follow-up schedules will be encouraged to do so. All discontinuations and withdrawals will be  
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9 documented.  
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### 11 12 13 *Primary outcome*

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15 The primary outcome is recovery of physical function assessed using the established,  
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17 validated patient-reported European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer  
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19 quality of life questionnaire (EORTC-QLQ-C30) at three and six weeks post-surgery and  
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21 three months after randomisation[19]. This quality of life measure was selected as the key  
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23 benefits of minimally invasive surgical techniques are the potential for less tissue damage  
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25 and consequently less pain and a more rapid recovery of function.[20] Patient groups also  
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27 indicated that quality of life is an outcome that is very important to them.  
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### 31 32 33 *Secondary outcome measures*

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35 Secondary outcomes will assess the efficacy of the OO and LAO in terms of morbidity,  
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37 survival and safety. Secondary outcomes will include:  
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#### 39 *Survival*

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41 • Overall and disease-free survival for at least 2-years.

#### 42 43 *Complications*

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45 • All-cause short and long-term complications for up to 3 years post-randomisation[21].
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47 • Any complications within 30 days of surgery, as assessed using the Clavien-Dindo  
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49 System.[22]
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51 • Length of hospital stay (defined as length of primary hospital stay plus readmission  
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53 within 30 days / length of primary hospital stay plus length of hospital stay if  
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55 discharged to community hospital).  
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- Forced expiratory volume in one second and forced vital capacity measured by spirometry, measured at baseline and days 3 and 6 post-operatively.

#### *Cost-effectiveness*

- Incremental net monetary benefit of LAO over OO 2 years after surgery.

#### *Quality of life*

- We will measure generic and disease specific aspects of HRQL using the following validated questionnaires at baseline, 6 days, 3 weeks and 6 weeks post-surgery and 3, 6, 9, 12, 18, 24 and, where possible, 36 months post-randomisation:
  - EORTC QLQ-C30[19] – a questionnaire developed to assess the health-related quality of life of cancer patients;
  - EORTC QLQ-OES18[23, 24]– a questionnaire developed to assess the health-related quality of life for oesophageal cancer patients;
  - MFI-20 [25, 26]– a tool widely used to assess fatigue in cancer patients;
  - EuroQOL EQ-5D-5L [27, 28] –a widely used generic quality of life questionnaire.

We will also measure pain pre-operatively and post-operatively at days 3 and 6 using the visual analogue scale (VAS)[29].

#### *Quality assurance*

We will assess QA of surgery (reported previously[14]) using:

- Intra-operative photographs will be taken at key stages throughout each procedure and submitted to the study database for on-going monitoring of the operations. Anonymised images will be reviewed and rated by surgical assessors.
- Histopathological measures assessed by pathologists blinded to the treatment allocation, including length of the oesophagus; total counts of nodes – all and malignant (positive) nodes; details of resection margins and pT staging. The slides of 10% of all cases from each centre will be reviewed by the lead pathologist.
- Success of patient blinding during the first six days post-operatively, assessed using the Bang blinding procedure[30]

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3 Outcome data will be collected onto case report forms (unless questionnaires are specified)  
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5 and entered onto a study-specific database for data cleaning and analysis.

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7 Data about adverse events will be collected and reported in accordance with Sponsor and  
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9 regulatory requirements.  
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### 11 12 13 14 *Patient and Public Involvement*

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16 Patient groups were consulted at the design stage, these feedback from these patient  
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18 consultations shaped the primary outcome and other aspects of the study. We have patient  
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20 representatives as grant co-applicants and as independent members of the trial steering  
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22 committee, in addition to this we will regularly consult patient and public groups about  
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24 different aspects of the study as it is ongoing. Patients have provided feedback on the  
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26 burden involved in participating in the research.  
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### 31 32 *Methods used to minimise bias*

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34 Patients will be blinded to their treatment allocation by covering all potential incision sites for  
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36 all surgical approaches (regardless of the actual operation performed) with large dressings  
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38 for the first 6 days post-operatively. On day 6 patients will be asked to complete a booklet  
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40 containing all of the quality of life questionnaires (QLQ-C30, OES-18, MFI-20, EQ5D5L) and  
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42 a pain assessment using the VAS. Success of blinding will be assessed using the Bang  
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44 Blinding Index.[30] Due to the nature of the study intervention, it is not possible to blind  
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46 patients for the completion of the quality of life questionnaires at the primary outcome  
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48 timepoints. However, patients have not had this surgery before so will not have anything to  
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50 compare it to, furthermore, participants in the study are unlikely to have a strong preference  
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52 for one approach over another.  
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57 Pathologists assessing QA of surgery will also be blinded to the randomised allocation. As  
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59 the intervention is surgery, there may be variation in surgeon skill or surgical technique. This  
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3 will be managed by stratifying the randomisation by centre. Surgical QA is described in more  
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5 detail elsewhere.[14]  
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9 Loss to follow up will be minimised by maintaining regular contact with patients (by  
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11 telephone and post) to complete follow-up questionnaires. No additional visits are required  
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13 for the study.  
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### 16 17 18 19 *Sample size*

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21 203 participants in each of the LAO and OO groups will allow a minimum clinically important  
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23 difference of 0.4 standard deviations on the primary outcome to be detected with more than  
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25 90% power at the 5% significance level, allowing for 15% of participants not following their  
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27 allocated procedure, and 10% failing to complete the primary outcome. We anticipate that  
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29 approximately 40 additional patients will be randomised to TMIO in the nested IDEAL 2b  
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31 sub-study to allow us to describe and evaluate changes in technique.  
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### 37 38 *Statistical analysis*

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40 The results will be reported according to the CONSORT guidelines, including the extension  
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42 for patient reported outcomes.[31] We will analyse the data according to the intention to treat  
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44 principle, in that the groups compared will be based on allocated treatment irrespective of  
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46 the actual operation that the patient had. Participants missing all three assessments  
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48 contributing to the primary outcome measure will not be included in the primary analysis, but  
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50 we will use sensitivity analyses to investigate the potential impact of any missing data. We  
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52 will adjust analyses for treatment centre, whether the participant underwent neoadjuvant  
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54 chemo(radio)therapy and the baseline value of the outcome under comparison. We will  
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56 prepare and make publicly available a detailed analysis plan prior to locking the database.  
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3 The primary outcome measure (difference between LAO and OO treatment groups) will be  
4 the reported difference in mean EORTC-QLQ-C30 scores for recovery of physical function  
5 (with 95% confidence interval and p-value). The difference in mean scores will be estimated  
6 as the co-efficient of a binary variable distinguishing the two treatment groups, in a multi-  
7 level regression model, with covariates as detailed. This analysis will be conducted  
8 separately for data from the feasibility and main trials, and the two treatment effect estimates  
9 pooled as a weighted average. The same approach will be adapted to the assessment of  
10 pain during the six days post-operatively and other measures of HRQL.  
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14 In addition, we will compare post-operative length of stay and accommodate the skewed  
15 distribution of this measure by a log-transformed analysis model presenting ratios of  
16 geometric means, 95% confidence interval and p-value.  
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19 We will present frequencies of the key treatment complications by treatment allocation.

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21 Severity of treatment complications will be compared between allocated treatment groups by  
22 scoring each patient according to their most severe Clavien-Dindo category and estimating  
23 the difference as an odds ratio using ordered logistic regression.  
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26 We will use proportional hazards regression to estimate the treatment difference in overall  
27 and disease-free survival. A Kaplan-Meier plot will present survival over time in the OO and  
28 LAO groups.  
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### 31 *Subgroup analyses*

32 A sub-group analysis will investigate whether the relative effects of OO and LAO differ  
33 according to whether a participant underwent neoadjuvant chemotherapy /  
34 chemoradiotherapy beforehand.  
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### 37 *Analysis of the nested IDEAL 2b study*

38 Data about the TMIO group will be collected and reported separately to the comparison  
39 between the OO and LAO groups, these patients will not be included in the main analysis.  
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3 We will document the inclusion / exclusion of patients for the TMIO procedure and any  
4 reasons for not performing the TMIO operation according to the randomised allocation. We  
5 will document the complications of TMIO and perform some analyses of safety and adverse  
6 events compared with the OO and LAO groups. We will document the evolution of the  
7 technical aspects of this procedure according to the IDEAL 2b framework.  
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### 13 *Cost-effectiveness analysis*

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15 We will convert EQ-5D-5L [18, 19] responses to utilities using the NICE-recommended UK  
16 tariff at the time of analysis.[32] These will be combined with survival data to calculate  
17 QALYs, adjusted for differences in baseline EQ-5D utility scores.[33] We will estimate  
18 theatre costs by collecting detailed information on equipment used and staff time (e.g.  
19 surgeons, anaesthetist, scrub nurse). We will collect information on intensive care resource  
20 use and re-interventions during the initial hospital stay. We will also collect and analyse data  
21 on health care resources used in subsequent inpatient stays, outpatient visits, general  
22 practitioner visits and other community health services. We will use nationally available unit  
23 costs to value resource use where available.  
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40 We will perform the cost-effectiveness analysis on an intention to treat basis from both an  
41 NHS perspective, and a wider personal and social care perspective. We will estimate the  
42 cost-effectiveness of LAO compared with OO by calculating the Incremental Net Monetary  
43 Benefit (INMB) and, if appropriate, the Incremental Cost-Effectiveness Ratio (ICER). We will  
44 present uncertainty in these estimates using a cost-effectiveness acceptability curve and/or  
45 cost-effectiveness ellipses. We will perform cost analyses at 3 and 24 months post-  
46 randomisation. At 24 months, we will discount the cost estimates at the rate recommended  
47 by HM Treasury at the time of analysis.[34] We will conduct one-way sensitivity analyses  
48 including varying the discount rate. Where appropriate, we will use simple or multiple  
49 imputation techniques for missing data.  
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### **Ethics and dissemination:**

All study interventions are already routinely used in the NHS. This study has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by the South West - Frenchay Research Ethics Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016 (REC, study ref: 184167). We will disseminate the findings by usual academic channels, i.e. presentation at international meetings and peer-reviewed publications. We will write a full report for the funder on the completion of the study and we will provide a lay summary of the results to patient organisations.

### *Study progress*

Recruitment started in October 2016 and we have recruited 277 patients, with an additional 32 TMIO patients (correct on 03 Apr 2019). We have agreed with the funder to continue recruitment until September 2019, beyond the planned completion of recruitment in November 2018. We will also include approximately 120 patients recruited to the feasibility study, having secured permission to continue recruitment to that study whilst the main trial was being set up.

### *Major changes to the study protocol*

Since the first study protocol was approved by the REC (the current version is v7.0, 25 October 2018), we have made the following changes:

- We updated the expected adverse events section to reflect the results of an international consensus paper on standardising reporting of complications of oesophagectomy[21] and to clarify that we will not collect events related to chemotherapy.
- We included information about plans to link with external registries (Intensive Care National Audit Research Centre, Public Health England, Information Services Division) to obtain more detailed data about ROMIO patient care in hospitals, for the

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2  
3 purpose of economic analysis and to capture information on acute post-operative  
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5 complications and recovery.  
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### 7 **Figure legends**

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9 Figure 1 CONSORT diagram outline (MDT: multi-disciplinary team; PIL: patient information  
10 leaflet; MIO: minimally invasive oesophagectomy; LAO: laparoscopically-assisted  
11 oesophagectomy; OO: open oesophagectomy)  
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13 Figure 2 Diagrams representing the incisions the surgeon may make for the three different  
14 surgical approaches  
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For peer review only

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### Author contributions:

All authors critically revised manuscript for important intellectual content and approved the manuscript.

- Rachel C Brierley developed the study design and aims, drafted the protocol and initiated the study, drafted the manuscript and oversaw study conduct and acquisition of data.

- 1  
2  
3 • Daisy M Gaunt developed the study design and aims, drafted the protocol and  
4 initiated the study. DMG also oversaw statistical aspects and analyses for the study.  
5  
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- 8  
9 • Chris Metcalfe developed the study concept and obtained grant funding, developed  
10 the study design and aims, drafted the protocol and initiated the study. CM also  
11 oversaw statistical aspects and analyses for the study.  
12  
13  
14
- 15  
16 • Jane M Blazeby developed the study concept and obtained grant funding, developed  
17 the study design and aims, drafted the protocol and initiated the study, oversaw the  
18 embedded quality assurance study and clinical aspects of the study.  
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- 23  
24 • Natalie S Blencowe developed the study concept and obtained grant funding,  
25 developed the study design and aims, drafted the protocol and initiated the study,  
26 oversaw the embedded quality assurance study.  
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29
- 30  
31 • Marcus Jepson developed the study design and aims, drafted the protocol and  
32 initiated the study, oversaw the embedded qualitative study.  
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- 36  
37 • Richard Berrisford developed the study concept and obtained grant funding,  
38 developed the study design and aims, drafted the protocol and initiated the study.  
39 Principal investigator and acquired data for the study.  
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45 • Kerry N L Avery developed the study concept and obtained grant funding, developed  
46 the study design and aims, drafted the protocol and initiated the study, oversaw  
47 patient and public involvement.  
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- 51  
52 • Lucy Culliford developed the study design and aims, drafted the protocol and initiated  
53 the study.  
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56
- 57  
58 • William Hollingworth developed and oversaw health economic aspects of the study.  
59  
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- 1
- 2
- 3 • Caoimhe T Rice developed the health economics aspects of the study.
- 4
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- 6
- 7 • Newton Wong developed the study concept and obtained grant funding, developed
- 8 the study design and aims, drafted the protocol and initiated the study and oversaw
- 9 pathology quality assurance in the study.
- 10
- 11
- 12
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- 14 • Aida Moure-Fernandez developed the study design and aims, drafted the protocol
- 15 and initiated the study and developed the health economics aspects of the study.
- 16
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- 18
- 19
- 20 • Joanna Nicklin developed the study design and aims, drafted the protocol and
- 21 initiated the study and acquired data for the study.
- 22
- 23
- 24
- 25 • Anni Skilton developed the study design and aims, drafted the protocol and initiated
- 26 the study and oversaw the embedded quality assurance study.
- 27
- 28
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- 30 • James Byrne was a Principal investigator and acquired data for the study.
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- 32
- 33
- 34 • Tim Underwood was a Principal investigator and acquired data for the study.
- 35
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- 37
- 38 • Peter Lamb was a Principal investigator and acquired data for the study.
- 39
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- 42
- 43
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- 51 • Bilal Alkhaffaf was a Principal investigator and acquired data for the study.
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- 54 • Ravi Vohra was a Principal investigator and acquired data for the study.
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- 57 • James Catton was a Principal investigator and acquired data for the study.
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- 3 • Richard Krysztopik was a Principal investigator and acquired data for the study.
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- 6
- 7 • Chris Rogers developed the study concept and obtained grant funding, developed
- 8 the study design and aims, drafted the protocol and initiated the study.
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- 12 • Benjamin Howes developed the study concept and obtained grant funding,
- 13 developed the study design and aims, drafted the protocol and initiated the study.
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- 17 • Katy Chalmers conducted the systematic review.
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- 21 • Sian Cousins conducted the systematic review.
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- 25 • Jackie Elliott developed the study concept and obtained grant funding and
- 26 contributed to PPI aspects of the study.
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- 29
- 30 • Jenny Donovan developed the study concept and obtained grant funding, developed
- 31 the study design and aims, drafted the protocol and initiated the study and oversaw
- 32 the embedded qualitative study.
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- 37 • Rachael Heyes conducted the study.
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- 41 • Robin Wickens conducted the study.
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- 45 • Paul Wilkerson acquired data for the study.
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- 48 • Andy Hollowood acquired data for the study.
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- 51 • Christopher Streets acquired data for the study.
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- 57
- 58 • Lee Humphreys acquired data for the study.
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- 23 • Richard J. E. Skipworth acquired data for the study.
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- 27 • Chris Deans acquired data for the study.
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- 30 • Sukhbir Ubhi acquired data for the study.
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- 33 • Rob Williams acquired data for the study.
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- 35
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- 39
- 40 • David Exon acquired data for the study.
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- 42
- 43 • Paul Turner acquired data for the study.
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- 45
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- 47 • Vinutha Shetty acquired data for the study.
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- 49
- 50 • Ram Chaparala acquired data for the study.
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- 52
- 53 • Khurshid Akhtar acquired data for the study.
- 54
- 55
- 56
- 57 • Naheed Farooq acquired data for the study.
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- 3 • Simon L. Parsons acquired data for the study.
- 4
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- 6
- 7 • Neil Welch acquired data for the study.
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- 9
- 10 • Rebecca Houlihan developed the study design and aims, drafted the protocol and
- 11 initiated the study and acquired data for the study.
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- 13
- 14
- 15 • Joanne Smith acquired data for the study.
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- 17
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- 39 • Lucy Howie acquired data for the study.
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- 41
- 42 • C Paul Barham developed the study concept and obtained grant funding, developed
- 43 the study design and aims, drafted the protocol and initiated the study, oversaw
- 44 clinical aspects of the study, oversaw the embedded quality assurance study and
- 45 was Chief Investigator for the study.
- 46
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15

16  
17 Steering Committee membership: Craig Ramsay (Chair, Professor in Health  
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29  
30 Data Monitoring Committee membership: Judith Bliss (Chair, Professor of Clinical  
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58 Department of Health Disclaimer:  
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1  
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3 The views and opinions expressed therein are those of the authors and do not  
4 necessarily reflect those of the HTA programme, NIHR, NHS or the Department of  
5 Health.  
6

7  
8 The funder and Sponsors approve any amendments to the study but have no direct  
9 involvement in study design; collection, management, analysis, and interpretation of  
10 data; writing of the report; and the decision to submit this report for publication.  
11

## 12 **Competing interests statement**

13  
14 No competing interests are declared  
15

## 16 **Data Sharing**

17  
18 Data will not be made available for sharing until after publication of the main results of the  
19 research. Thereafter, anonymised individual patient data will be made available for  
20 secondary research, conditional on assurance from the secondary researcher that the  
21 proposed use of the data is compliant with the MRC Policy on Data Preservation and  
22 Sharing regarding scientific quality, ethical requirements and value for money. A minimum  
23 requirement with respect to scientific quality will be a publicly available pre-specified protocol  
24 describing the purpose, methods and analysis of the secondary research, e.g. a protocol for  
25 a Cochrane systematic review. The second file containing patient identifiers would be made  
26 available for record linkage or a similar purpose, subject to confirmation that the secondary  
27 research protocol has been approved by a UK REC or other similar, approved ethics review  
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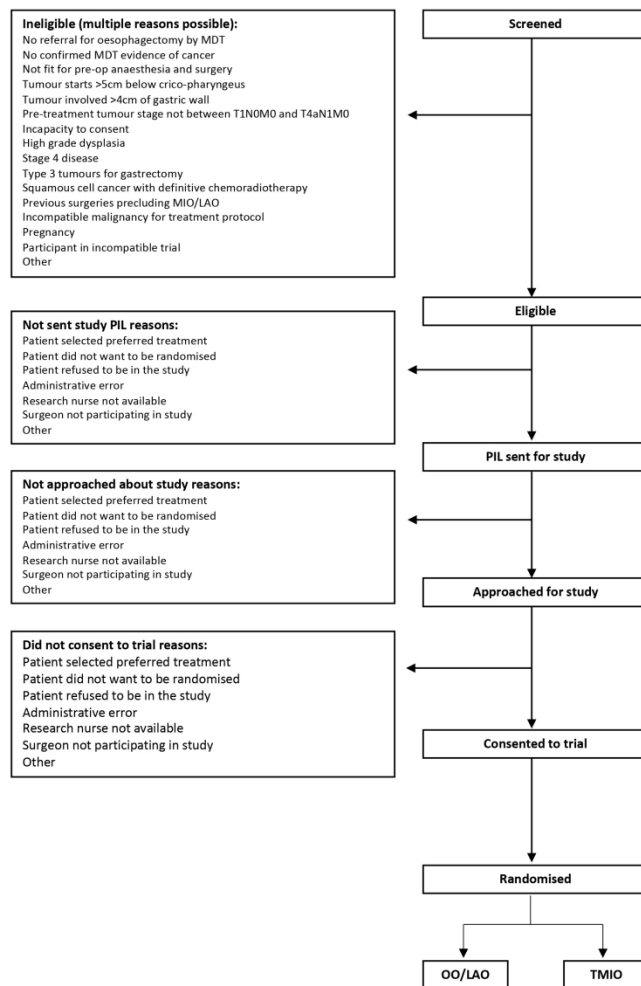
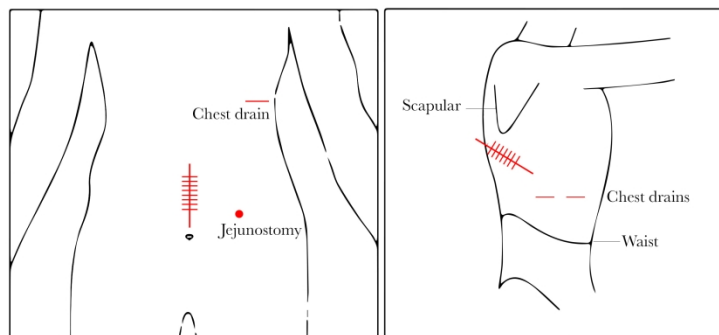


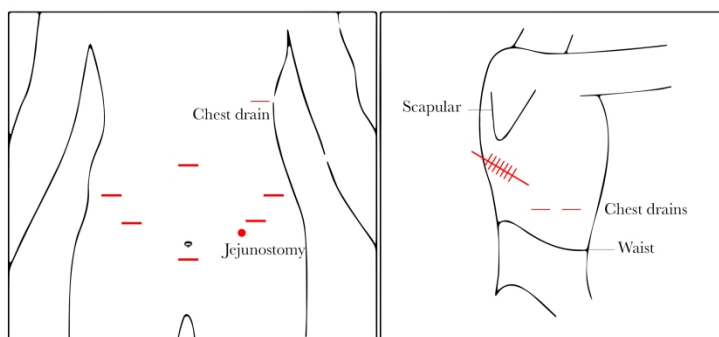
Figure 1 CONSORT diagram outline (MDT: multi-disciplinary team; PIL: patient information leaflet; MIO: minimally invasive oesophagectomy; LAO: laparoscopically-assisted oesophagectomy; OO: open oesophagectomy)

Figure 1 CONSORT diagram outline (MDT: multi-disciplinary team; PIL: patient information leaflet; MIO: minimally invasive oesophagectomy; LAO: laparoscopically-assisted oesophagectomy; OO: open oesophagectomy)

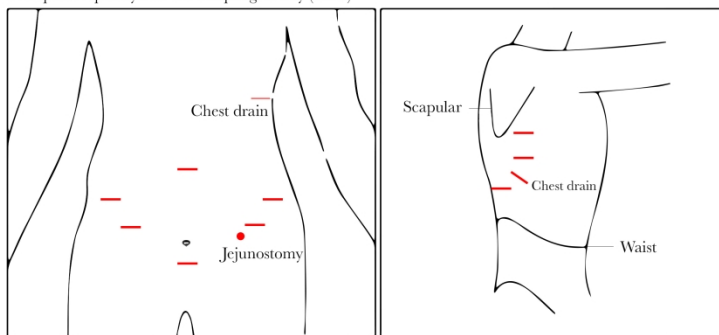
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A. Open oesophagectomy (OO)



B. Laparoscopically assisted oesophagectomy (LAO)



C. Totally minimally invasive oesophagectomy (TMIO)

Figure 2 Diagrams representing the incisions the surgeon may make for the three different surgical approaches

Figure 2 Diagrams representing the incisions the surgeon may make for the three different surgical approaches

293x358mm (300 x 300 DPI)

# Reporting checklist for protocol of a clinical trial.

Based on the SPIRIT guidelines.

## Instructions to authors

Complete this checklist by entering the page numbers from your manuscript where readers will find each of the items listed below.

Your article may not currently address all the items on the checklist. Please modify your text to include the missing information. If you are certain that an item does not apply, please write "n/a" and provide a short explanation.

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		Reporting Item	Page Number
Title	<a href="#">#1</a>	Descriptive title identifying the study design, population, interventions, and, if applicable, trial acronym	1
Trial registration	<a href="#">#2a</a>	Trial identifier and registry name. If not yet registered, name of intended registry	4
Trial registration: data set	<a href="#">#2b</a>	All items from the World Health Organization Trial Registration Data Set	All relevant information is included throughout the paper.
Protocol version	<a href="#">#3</a>	Date and version identifier	17
Funding	<a href="#">#4</a>	Sources and types of financial, material, and other support	21-22
Roles and responsibilities: contributorship	<a href="#">#5a</a>	Names, affiliations, and roles of protocol contributors	1-2, 20-21

1	Roles and	<a href="#">#5b</a>	Name and contact information for the trial	21
2	responsibilities:		sponsor	
3	sponsor contact			
4	information			
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7	Roles and	<a href="#">#5c</a>	Role of study sponsor and funders, if any, in	22
8	responsibilities:		study design; collection, management,	
9	sponsor and		analysis, and interpretation of data; writing of	
10	funder		the report; and the decision to submit the	
11			report for publication, including whether they	
12			will have ultimate authority over any of these	
13			activities	
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19	Roles and	<a href="#">#5d</a>	Composition, roles, and responsibilities of the	21
20	responsibilities:		coordinating centre, steering committee,	
21	committees		endpoint adjudication committee, data	
22			management team, and other individuals or	
23			groups overseeing the trial, if applicable (see	
24			Item 21a for data monitoring committee)	
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29	Background and	<a href="#">#6a</a>	Description of research question and	6-7
30	rationale		justification for undertaking the trial, including	
31			summary of relevant studies (published and	
32			unpublished) examining benefits and harms	
33			for each intervention	
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37	Background and	<a href="#">#6b</a>	Explanation for choice of comparators	6-7
38	rationale: choice of			
39	comparators			
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42	Objectives	<a href="#">#7</a>	Specific objectives or hypotheses	7
43				
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45	Trial design	<a href="#">#8</a>	Description of trial design including type of	9
46			trial (eg, parallel group, crossover, factorial,	
47			single group), allocation ratio, and framework	
48			(eg, superiority, equivalence, non-inferiority,	
49			exploratory)	
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53	Study setting	<a href="#">#9</a>	Description of study settings (eg, community	21
54			clinic, academic hospital) and list of countries	
55			where data will be collected. Reference to	
56			where list of study sites can be obtained	
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1	Eligibility criteria	<a href="#">#10</a>	Inclusion and exclusion criteria for	9-10
2			participants. If applicable, eligibility criteria for	
3			study centres and individuals who will perform	
4			the interventions (eg, surgeons,	
5			psychotherapists)	
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9	Interventions:	<a href="#">#11a</a>	Interventions for each group with sufficient	10-11
10	description		detail to allow replication, including how and	
11			when they will be administered	
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14	Interventions:	<a href="#">#11b</a>	Criteria for discontinuing or modifying	11
15	modifications		allocated interventions for a given trial	
16			participant (eg, drug dose change in response	
17			to harms, participant request, or improving /	
18			worsening disease)	
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23	Interventions:	<a href="#">#11c</a>	Strategies to improve adherence to	n/a- ROMIO is a
24	adherence		intervention protocols, and any procedures for	pragmatic trial
25			monitoring adherence (eg, drug tablet return;	
26			laboratory tests)	
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30	Interventions:	<a href="#">#11d</a>	Relevant concomitant care and interventions	10 (otherwise n/a as
31	concomitant care		that are permitted or prohibited during the trial	ROMIO is a pragmatic
32				trial)
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35	Outcomes	<a href="#">#12</a>	Primary, secondary, and other outcomes,	12-13
36			including the specific measurement variable	
37			(eg, systolic blood pressure), analysis metric	
38			(eg, change from baseline, final value, time to	
39			event), method of aggregation (eg, median,	
40			proportion), and time point for each outcome.	
41			Explanation of the clinical relevance of	
42			chosen efficacy and harm outcomes is	
43			strongly recommended	
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49	Participant timeline	<a href="#">#13</a>	Time schedule of enrolment, interventions	10, 12-13
50			(including any run-ins and washouts),	
51			assessments, and visits for participants. A	
52			schematic diagram is highly recommended	
53			(see Figure)	
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1	Sample size	<a href="#">#14</a>	Estimated number of participants needed to	14
2			achieve study objectives and how it was	
3			determined, including clinical and statistical	
4			assumptions supporting any sample size	
5			calculations	
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9	Recruitment	<a href="#">#15</a>	Strategies for achieving adequate participant	Not included here
10			enrolment to reach target sample size	
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13	Allocation:	<a href="#">#16a</a>	Method of generating the allocation sequence	10
14	sequence		(eg, computer-generated random numbers),	
15	generation		and list of any factors for stratification. To	
16			reduce predictability of a random sequence,	
17			details of any planned restriction (eg,	
18			blocking) should be provided in a separate	
19			document that is unavailable to those who	
20			enrol participants or assign interventions	
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26	Allocation	<a href="#">#16b</a>	Mechanism of implementing the allocation	10
27	concealment		sequence (eg, central telephone; sequentially	
28	mechanism		numbered, opaque, sealed envelopes),	
29			describing any steps to conceal the sequence	
30			until interventions are assigned	
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34	Allocation:	<a href="#">#16c</a>	Who will generate the allocation sequence,	10
35	implementation		who will enrol participants, and who will	
36			assign participants to interventions	
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39	Blinding (masking)	<a href="#">#17a</a>	Who will be blinded after assignment to	13
40			interventions (eg, trial participants, care	
41			providers, outcome assessors, data analysts),	
42			and how	
43				
44				
45				
46	Blinding (masking):	<a href="#">#17b</a>	If blinded, circumstances under which	N/A –pathologists are
47	emergency		unblinding is permissible, and procedure for	blinded. Patients are
48	unblinding		revealing a participant's allocated intervention	blinded until a week
49			during the trial	after surgery, success
50				of patient blinding is
51				assessed.
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56	Data collection	<a href="#">#18a</a>	Plans for assessment and collection of	12-13
57	plan		outcome, baseline, and other trial data,	
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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

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13	Data collection	<a href="#">#18b</a>	Plans to promote participant retention and
14	plan: retention		complete follow-up, including list of any
15			outcome data to be collected for participants
16			who discontinue or deviate from intervention
17			protocols
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21	Data management	<a href="#">#19</a>	Plans for data entry, coding, security, and
22			storage, including any related processes to
23			promote data quality (eg, double data entry;
24			range checks for data values). Reference to
25			where details of data management
26			procedures can be found, if not in the protocol
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31	Statistics:	<a href="#">#20a</a>	Statistical methods for analysing primary and
32	outcomes		secondary outcomes. Reference to where
33			other details of the statistical analysis plan
34			can be found, if not in the protocol
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38	Statistics:	<a href="#">#20b</a>	Methods for any additional analyses (eg,
39	additional analyses		subgroup and adjusted analyses)
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42	Statistics: analysis	<a href="#">#20c</a>	Definition of analysis population relating to
43	population and		protocol non-adherence (eg, as randomised
44	missing data		analysis), and any statistical methods to
45			handle missing data (eg, multiple imputation)
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48	Data monitoring:	<a href="#">#21a</a>	Composition of data monitoring committee
49	formal committee		(DMC); summary of its role and reporting
50			structure; statement of whether it is
51			independent from the sponsor and competing
52			interests; and reference to where further
53			details about its charter can be found, if not in
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		the protocol. Alternatively, an explanation of why a DMC is not needed	
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4	Data monitoring: interim analysis	<a href="#">#21b</a> Description of any interim analyses and stopping guidelines, including who will have access to these interim results and make the final decision to terminate the trial	n/a – no interim analyses planned
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10	Harms	<a href="#">#22</a> Plans for collecting, assessing, reporting, and managing solicited and spontaneously reported adverse events and other unintended effects of trial interventions or trial conduct	14
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19	Auditing	<a href="#">#23</a> Frequency and procedures for auditing trial conduct, if any, and whether the process will be independent from investigators and the sponsor	11
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26	Research ethics approval	<a href="#">#24</a> Plans for seeking research ethics committee / institutional review board (REC / IRB) approval	17
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31	Protocol amendments	<a href="#">#25</a> 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)	17-18
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41	Consent or assent	<a href="#">#26a</a> Who will obtain informed consent or assent from potential trial participants or authorised surrogates, and how (see Item 32)	10
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46	Consent or assent: ancillary studies	<a href="#">#26b</a> Additional consent provisions for collection and use of participant data and biological specimens in ancillary studies, if applicable	n/a
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51	Confidentiality	<a href="#">#27</a> 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	21
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1	Declaration of	<a href="#">#28</a>	Financial and other competing interests for	22
2	interests		principal investigators for the overall trial and	
3			each study site	
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6	Data access	<a href="#">#29</a>	Statement of who will have access to the final	22
7			trial dataset, and disclosure of contractual	
8			agreements that limit such access for	
9			investigators	
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13	Ancillary and post	<a href="#">#30</a>	Provisions, if any, for ancillary and post-trial	N/A
14	trial care		care, and for compensation to those who	
15			suffer harm from trial participation	
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18	Dissemination	<a href="#">#31a</a>	Plans for investigators and sponsor to	17
19	policy: trial results		communicate trial results to participants,	
20			healthcare professionals, the public, and	
21			other relevant groups (eg, via publication,	
22			reporting in results databases, or other data	
23			sharing arrangements), including any	
24			publication restrictions	
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30	Dissemination	<a href="#">#31b</a>	Authorship eligibility guidelines and any	n/a
31	policy: authorship		intended use of professional writers	
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34	Dissemination	<a href="#">#31c</a>	Plans, if any, for granting public access to the	The protocol is
35	policy:		full protocol, participant-level dataset, and	publically available on
36	reproducible		statistical code	the NIHR website
37	research			
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40	Informed consent	<a href="#">#32</a>	Model consent form and other related	Available on request
41	materials		documentation given to participants and	
42			authorised surrogates	
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46	Biological	<a href="#">#33</a>	Plans for collection, laboratory evaluation,	N/A
47	specimens		and storage of biological specimens for	
48			genetic or molecular analysis in the current	
49			trial and for future use in ancillary studies, if	
50			applicable	
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