

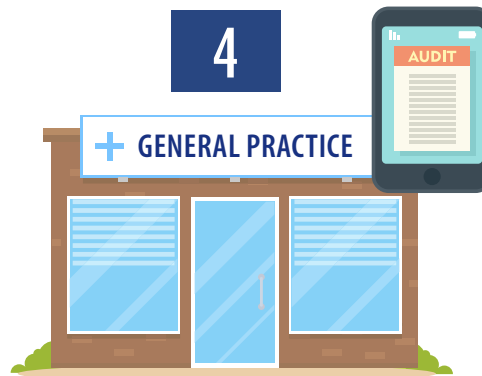
Is it practical to deliver reminders about diabetic retinopathy screening in general practices?

Retinopathy screening attendance rates are below the recommended levels in many countries, including Ireland. As people with diabetes visit their GP regularly, we wanted to see if it was practical for staff in general practices to identify and remind patients about the national screening service, Diabetic RetinaScreen.

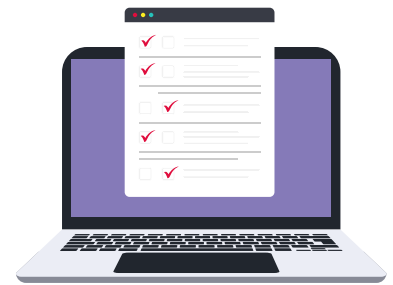
How did we carry out the study?



We carried out our study in **eight** general practices across Ireland over a **six-month** period



Four practices carried out an **audit** of screening attendance



They added alerts to the **electronic records** of patients who did not take part in screening

REMINDER

▶ **Staff reminded** these patients either **in person**, on the **phone**, or **by letter**, and gave them a **short leaflet** with messages from the practice about why they should go. To support practices to introduce these changes, they were **reimbursed** and provided with **manuals and training**.

To find out what people thought about this new approach



We **surveyed** all

25

staff members



We then **interviewed**

9

of these staff members



as well as

10

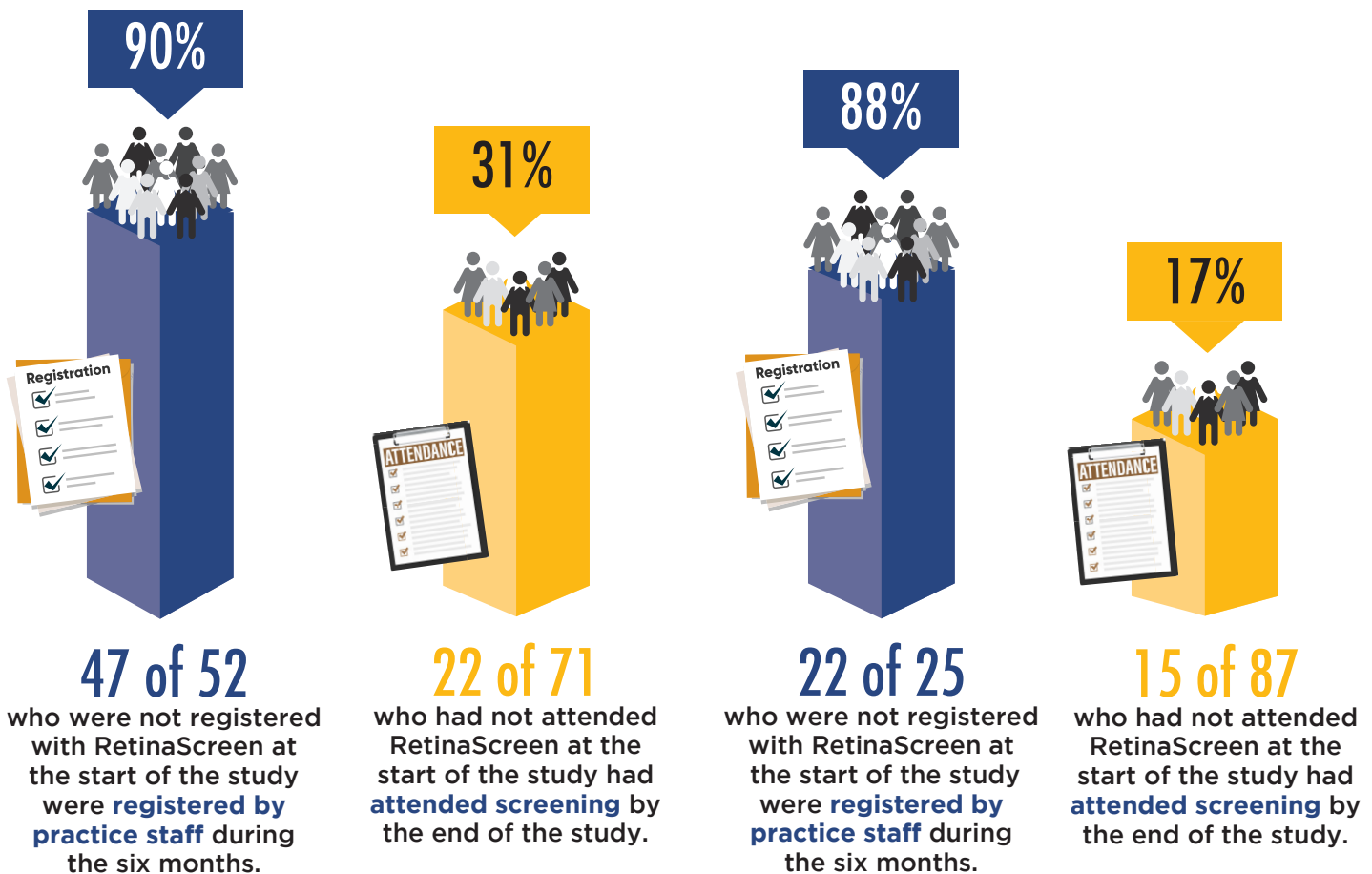
patients.

▶ The other four practices were asked to **keep doing what they always do** during the six-month period.

What did we find?

In the four practices that introduced the changes:

In the four practices that did **not** introduce the changes:



Our results suggest the new approach could be a **practical way to improve attendance**. However, it was a very small study, and we would need a larger study to be certain that the approach improves attendance.

What factors influenced patients to take part in screening?

REMINDER

Having received **reminders**, several factors influenced patients to take part in the screening programme. These factors included **trust in the GP or nurse** who delivered the reminder and the **timing** of the reminder (whether patients were ready to act based on their **attitudes to their health, concerns, and priorities** at that time).

What did staff think about this new approach to promote screening in the practice?



Staff thought that the new approach was a **good idea** and **feasible**, but this depended on whether they could **manage their time**. They found ways to make the changes fit with their usual way of working and existing skillset. For example, **the new approach was less challenging in practices where staff had more experience doing audits**.