

Guide for first round of clinical trial searches – UK trials project

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Project purpose

This project is going to follow up on 145 clinical trials completed by the ten largest UK non-commercial sponsors (such as universities and public health bodies) during 2017 to identify completely unreported trials. We will then contact the sponsors with a list of their unreported trials and ask them what they plan to do to ensure that their results are made public.

Hopefully, as a result of this project:

- (a) some unreported trial results will be made public
- (b) some important sponsors will improve their trial reporting policies and practices
- (c) we can later determine whether contacting sponsors in this way is an effective and cost-effective way of increasing medical knowledge based on the dataset we are creating now

The results of this project will be published as a TranspariMED report, and the names of all contributors will be published in the report. TranspariMED will share the report with the media and with relevant UK institutions, including the sponsors themselves, public research funders, and the national ethics regulator.

Search guide

For each trial, you perform 3 search steps, one after the other, in the order below. You keep searching until you have found a trial's results. As soon as you have found a trial's results, you can stop searching and start the whole process again with the next trial on your list.

You can apply the same search strategy to both trial registries:

- ***ClinicalTrials.gov*** <https://clinicaltrials.gov/>
- ***ISRCTN*** <https://www.isrctn.com/search?q=> (this is the de facto UK national trial registry)

Notes:

- ***We will only count articles in peer-reviewed journals and PhD theses as 'publications'. If during searching you find trial results in any different format (e.g. poster, presentation, preprint) please paste the hyperlink into the column "grey literature" and then continue the search.***
- ***You do not need to add publication dates to the spreadsheet.***
- ***Feel free to note anything of interest in the column "comments," for example if you discover that a trial was also registered with a different trial registry, or to explain why you are unsure if the publication you found really contains the trial's results.***

Step 1. Scan the “results” section of ClinicalTrials.gov or ISRCTN for publications

ClinicalTrials.gov: Click on the tab “No results posted”. You may or may not see one or several hyperlinked publications, like this:

Publications automatically indexed to this study by ClinicalTrials.gov Identifier (NCT Number):

[Bangs ME, Wietecha LA, Wang S, Buchanan AS, Kelsey DK. Meta-analysis of suicide-related behavior or ideation in child, adolescent, and adult patients treated with atomoxetine. J Child Adolesc Psychopharmacol. 2014 Oct;24\(8\):426-34. doi: 10.1089/cap.2014.0005. Epub 2014 Jul 14.](#)

[Newcorn JH, Sutton VK, Zhang S, Wilens T, Kratochvil C, Emslie GJ, D'souza DN, Schuh LM, Allen AJ. Characteristics of placebo responders in pediatric clinical trials of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry. 2009 Dec;48\(12\):1165-72. doi: 10.1097/CHI.0b013e3181bc730d.](#)

[Block SL, Kelsey D, Coury D, Lewis D, Quintana H, Sutton V, Schuh K, Allen AJ, Sumner C. Once-daily atomoxetine for treating pediatric attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder: comparison of morning and evening dosing. Clin Pediatr \(Phila\). 2009 Sep;48\(7\):723-33. doi: 10.1177/0009922809335321. Epub 2009 May 6.](#)

Note: You can ignore anything that was published before the trial's primary completion date.

ISRCTN: Scroll to the bottom of the entry for the trial. You may see results listed. Note: “protocols” are not results.

Trial outputs

Output type ▲	Details ▼	Date created ▼	Date added ▼	Peer reviewed? ▼	Patient-facing? ▼
Protocol article	protocol	06/03/2017		Yes	No
Results article	results	10/10/2017		Yes	No
Results article	results	20/03/2018		Yes	No

After that, for both registries:

- If you see no hyperlinked publications, move on to Step 3.
- If you do see hyperlinked publications:
 - You will need to check whether any of these publications actually contains trial results. For all other publications, click on the hyperlink and take a look at the publication. If the title of the publication contains “protocol” it's the trial's design, not its results = ignore. Also, there might be several publications that briefly reference the trial, but do not contain its results.*
 - If you think you have definitely found the publication with the trial's results, copy the hyperlink into the spreadsheet = done.
 - If you think you have probably found the trial's results but are not 100% sure, copy the hyperlink into the spreadsheet, and enter “1” into the column in the spreadsheet called “unsure” = done.

If you have (probably) found a relevant publication = done, you can move on to the next trial on your list. If you have not found any relevant publication, move to Step 2.

Step 2: Paste the trial number (e.g. NCT05439460) into Google Scholar

Scan the first 2 pages for potential trial results. As before:

- If you think you have definitely found the publication with the trial's results, copy the hyperlink into the spreadsheet = done.
- If you think you have probably found the trial's results but are not 100% sure, copy the hyperlink into the spreadsheet, and enter "1" into the column in the spreadsheet called "unsure" = done.

If you have (probably) found a relevant publication = done, you can move on to the next trial on your list. If you have not found any relevant publication, move to Step 3.

Step 3: Search Google Scholar for trial title and investigator name

Paste the trial's title (such as *Transcutaneous Electrical Acupoint Stimulation for the Treatment of ADHD*; the title is right on top of the ClinicalTrials.gov entry) into Google Scholar. Then paste the Principal Investigator's name (on ClinicalTrials.gov, near the bottom of the registry entry) or the Scientific Contact (on ISRCTN, is listed before the ORCID) behind that, and put that name into "quotation marks".

So your search string will look like this:

Transcutaneous Electrical Acupoint Stimulation for the Treatment of ADHD "Yan Li"

Then hit ENTER. Scan the first 2 pages for potential trial results. As before:

- If you think you have definitely found the publication with the trial's results, copy the hyperlink into the spreadsheet = done.
- If you think you have probably found the trial's results, but are not 100% sure, copy the hyperlink into the spreadsheet, and enter "1" into the column in the spreadsheet called "unsure" = done.

If you have not found any relevant publication, mark enter "1" into the column in the spreadsheet called "unreported".

Done! Thank you. You can now move on to the next trial on your list.

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