Comments for Johan Blakkisrud ‘Randomized Controlled Trials the gold standard with?’

[1] The topic of randomized controlled trials is interesting and raises several methodological issues. In your outline you say that the aim of your essay will be to see if RCTs also are ethically sound. I think that this question has to be clarified before you start writing. In what ways could RCTs be ethically problematic? Which particular ethical issue you have in mind?

[2] Once this is clarified, it would be good to narrow-down the discussion of your question by focusing on one or two case studies: provide background information and investigate ethical challenges that arise in this particular case(s). For example, you might like to choose a particular domain of research where RCTs are used and see what kind of ethical implications and problems arise there. It is always more manageable to work with a case study, especially in a short argumentative essay like this one. Discussing the ethics of RCTs in general may be an overly ambitious goal.

[3] Your discussion of the cases would have to be based on relevant ethical theories. You may like to use either consequentialism or deontology as the main framework of try to compare what kind of answers the two ethical theories would yield in your case studies. Please use relevant literature from lectures and seminars concerning ethical theories and applied ethics, in particular research ethics. You may also look into these materials and search for further references here:

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/clinical-research/>

Truog, R. D., Robinson, W., Randolph, A., & Morris, A. (1999). Is informed consent always necessary for randomized, controlled trials. *N Engl J Med*, *340*(10), 804-807.

Hutton, J. L. (2001). Are distinctive ethical principles required for cluster randomized controlled trials?. *Statistics in medicine*, *20*(3), 473-488.