

RESOURCE BULLETIN

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Summary of this bulletin

This bulletin features web-based, open-access resources from Practihc (Pragmatic randomized controlled trials in health care) that have relevance to researchers interested in conducting trials in the health care sphere.

- Trial protocol tool TPT supports production of a high quality research protocol
- Clinical Trials Simulator CTS simulates the running of trials

Practihc Pragmatic randomized controlled trials in health care

Practihc is a collaboration of researchers across 11 countries funded by the European Commission's 5th Framework Programme for international collaboration with Developing Countries. It is a research and technology development network that aims to provide 'information for action' on key health issues. The project aims generally to increase partner countries' capacity to evaluate health systems, to develop the science of randomised controlled trials (RCTs) globally, and to promote international research and technology development co-operation. There is A good general presentation on Practihc on the presentations page of the Practihc website.

This bulletin highlights the collaboration's production of two open-access tools that facilitate conduct of RCTs. Practihc's focus is on pragmatic RCTs—trials that enable evaluation of the effects of interventions as they are implemented in real world contexts ie. hospitals, wards, clinics, as well as individual patients, practitioners or community members.

Trial protocol tool TPT

TPT is a tool that guides you through every stage of writing a trial protocol. It is primarily concerned with RCT study design, but has relevance to other parallel study designs and to the undertaking of high quality research in general. (Parallel study designs allocate people to receive one of two clinical interventions—an intervention, experimental or treatment group or a comparison or control group). TPT contains a wealth of information including: What should be in a good trial protocol (eg. research question, intervention, sample size including Sample size calculator, analysis strategies, consumer involvement, and reporting); Useful documents (including the CONSORT statement—a set of recommendations that aim to improve the reporting of RCTs); Protocol library; Teaching resources (including a link to Clinical Trial Simulator CTS); Web resources; and an extensive Glossary.

Download TPT to your computer by selecting one of two versions that will be distributed in a folder called Trial Protocol Tool . Double-click on the file called Trial Protocol Tool to open the tool. Other folders are included in the download; however their contents are mostly incorporated within TPT. PowerPoint presentations in the Teaching resources section provide quick insight into the tool.

Clinical Trials Simulator CTS—IcebergSim306

CTS is a software package that simulates an RCT enabling users to explore aspects of design, implementation and analysis of a trial. The user conceives a trial, enters data and runs the simulation. CTS then presents the results (including the CONSORT figure, relative risk etc.). The latest version of CTS, called IcebergSim306, is available via the tools page of the Practihc website. Links take you to Iceberg home page and this provides background to the program, links to the guided tour page (containing invaluable PowerPoint presentations) and the downloads page for IcebergSim306.

Practihc website for TPT and CTS:
<http://www.practihc.org/index.htm>
 Iceberg website for CTS download page:
<http://www.randomization.org/>

Forwarding of bulletins is encouraged.
 Bulletins are available at:
<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/cochrane/HKN/HKNindex.html>
 Contact Health Knowledge Network: hkn@latrobe.edu.au

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