

Re: Schools Teaching Awareness of Randomised Trials (START)

Dear School Teacher / Principal

You can help your students become the



scientists of tomorrow and the
 **critical thinkers of today**

The pandemic of 2020 / 2021 has brought with it a lot of new information for everyone to understand. Our children have been asked to make significant changes to the way they live and interact with their communities.

Everyday children are faced with **health claims**, some reliable and some not so reliable. But how do we help children see the **fake news** from the credible information. How do we teach our children to develop a critical eye when it comes to all of the information they encounter every day, in particular when it comes to their health? We think we have the answer... and it's a lot of fun!

"The Need For Critical Thinking Among Children Is Now"

On May 20th every year, the world celebrates International Clinical Trials Day. This event marks the anniversary of the first well-documented clinical trial, which was conducted with sailors in the navy in 1747. Researchers in University of Galway wish to celebrate this important occasion with the help of the younger members of our community. We invite your 4th, 5th & 6th classes to lead on an exciting project and create their very own trial. Teachers and students are asked to identify a suitable research question they can answer scientifically using the resources provided on the website - **www.STARTcompetition.com**. The purpose of this competition is to help students become aware of the trial process, and gain insights into the best way to conduct a fair comparison.

Pick a simple, easy to answer question, but use the proper steps of a trial to answer it and make sure to have fun!

This project addresses several key aspects of the school curriculum, as outlined below. The best part is that you can report the findings in any way you like, podcast, video, collage



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START

Schools Teaching Awareness of Randomised Trials



Health Research Board

TMRN

Trials Methodology Research Network

or poster, report, it's up to you to be as creative as you like! And the best bit.... the top three shortlisted schools will be invited to take part in an awards ceremony in University of Galway. This event will showcase the excellent work done by all schools for this competition and give an opportunity for children to meet scientists and trialists from University of Galway. At this event, the overall winner will be announced and presented with a START trophy and children will be interviewed on their work, which can be shared with friends and family.

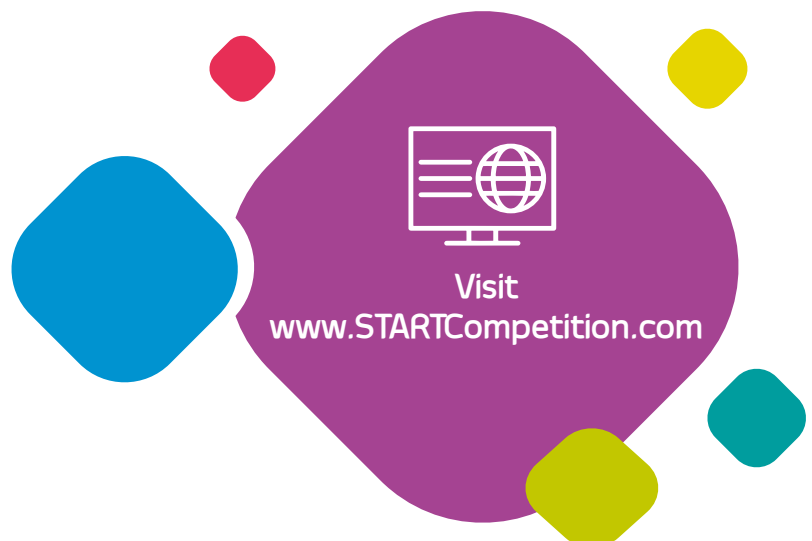
The START competition does not cost anything to enter. Please visit our website www.STARTcompetition.com for further details and to see previous winning entries.

We look forward to receiving your entry.

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facebook.com/STARTCompetition



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Trial Ambassadors

The START competition has the help and support of trial ambassadors, who are PhD students involved in conducting clinical trials. Feel free to contact them by phone or email to discuss any issues you encounter. You can also contact the HRB-TMRN at hrb-tmrn@universityofgalway.ie to discuss further.

How this competition can help meet key aspects of the current school's curriculum:

Maths

Students will need to collect and analyse data in order to see the effects of their intervention. This will mean comparing the results of two groups of participants that are involved to see differences in their effects.

Science

A clinical trial, like any scientific experiment, requires participants to stick to a defined set of rules and procedures in order to get the best results. The project also teaches children the foundation processes around where evidence for healthcare decisions are made.

Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE)

The START competition will help students question the choices they make around their own health and wellbeing and create a sense of personal responsibility for the everyday decisions they make. By working in a team, as a class or as a school, the students will be able to see each other's strengths in delivering such a project.

English / Irish

The students will be challenged to explain the project to those involved; this may mean younger pupils or family members or the wider community. The final presentation of the project findings will require students to compile the findings in a clear and concise way.

Visual arts

There are no restrictions in the format for which the findings can be presented. Students are encouraged to be creative and use any format they wish.

Information & communication technology (ICT)

The project will require research by the students to understand the processes involved. A wide range of online resources will be made available to students. Students can also use technology to present their work.



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