

Randomized Controlled Trials

What are randomized controlled trials?

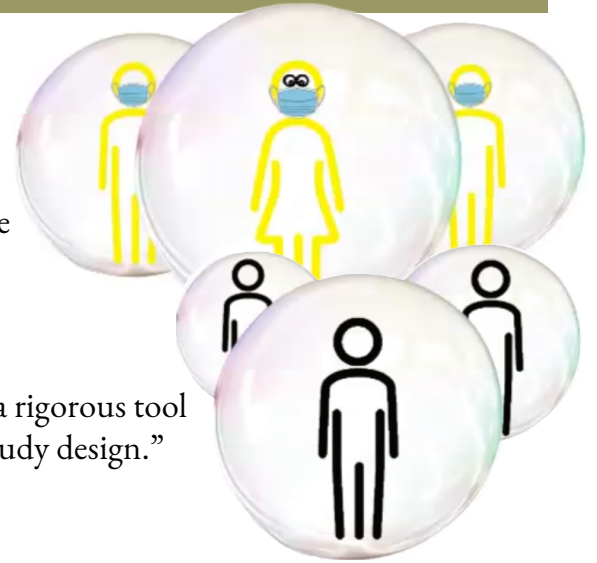
RCTs are studies in which people are randomly assigned to receive or not receive a certain treatment.

Why are they important?

RCTs are the “gold standard” for research because they provide “a rigorous tool to examine cause–effect,” which “is not possible with any other study design.”

What do well-designed RCTs include?

- Pre Analysis Plans - where researchers disclose what they plan to measure before they measure it.
- Placebos (when possible) - fake treatment, so people don't alter their mindsets or behaviors as a result of knowing who receives the treatment.



What issues should you look for?

1. Data manipulation
2. Attrition
3. Intent-to-treat
4. Meaningful outcomes
5. Margins of error



REMEMBER: If an RCT is well-designed and honestly presented, there's no need for complex analytical strategies.