

# WHAT IS A SWAT?

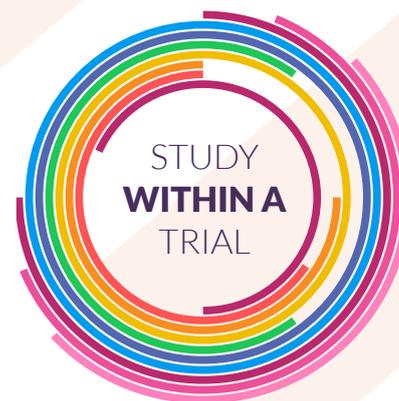
**We need to use good methods to improve the process of conducting clinical trials for participants and researchers. One approach that can help researchers identify the best methods is by doing a Study Within a Trial, or 'SWAT' for short.**

**Let's start by understanding what clinical trials are.**

- Clinical trials are research studies that test if a new form of treatment (such as a new drug, diet, or medical device) is safe and effective for people to use.
- The best way to see how well the treatment works is by giving some patients the treatment and not giving others.

**Clinical trials consist of various stages, each playing a key role in the overall process.**

- Some of these stages include participant recruitment i.e., inviting patients to participate in the trial, data collection (such as through questionnaires), and participant retention i.e., keeping participants involved in the trial.
- Both participant recruitment and participant retention can be difficult. This can greatly impact the reliability of trial results.



**So, what exactly is a SWAT?** A 'Study Within A Trial' (SWAT) is a smaller research study conducted within a larger clinical trial. It is important to note that SWATs can be built in from the start of the trial, or added later and should not affect the larger trial value or outcomes.

**How do SWATs help?** SWATs can assist researchers in selecting the best methods for conducting trials. They do this by testing out various research strategies, including new and commonly used approaches, to determine their impact on different trial stages. For example, researchers have carried out SWATs to assess whether providing participants with trial information on video and paper together increases their willingness to participate in a trial compared to just providing this information on paper.

**Why is this important?** SWATs allow researchers to gather evidence on the effectiveness of specific interventions or modifications in trial procedures. Healthcare professionals rely on this evidence when treating patients.



**SWATs:** *small studies playing a big role in making clinical trials better*