

An introduction to the Trial Forge SWAT network

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www.trialforge.org



Studies Within A Trial– SWATs

It is essential that trials are done in the most effective and efficient ways and one way to do this is to use the same types of evaluation to investigate and improve the processes of how we do randomised trials.



Mike Clarke,
Belfast, UK



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But..

- We think most trials don't include one, which is a shame.
- Hints that the number of NIHR HTA trials including a SWAT has fallen.
- How to best spread the word about trial process interventions that have new SWAT evidence is a bit unclear
- Perhaps more cooperation and coordination might boost our SWAT mojo.



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The SWAT Network idea



UNIVERSITY
of York



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Catherine Arundel



Laura Clark



Izzy Coleman



David Torgerson



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What might a network offer?

- Links with a group of people who are doing SWATs.
- Help us know more about the SWATs people are doing.
- Help us know what SWATs aren't being done, but should be.
- Help to disseminate evidence coming from SWATs.
- Highlight problems and challenges and try to fix them together.
- Run seminars/meetings to keep discussing the above.



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How much interest is there?

- A pleasing amount. By my reckoning we have 21 teams in the network.
- All but one is from the UK, with the other one being from Australia.
- Most are trials units but one is a funder, another a national public health unit.
- We've spoken to 15 of the teams so far.



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Where are they?

..plus one in Sydney.



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What sort of things have been raised #1

- Some trials units have SWAT teams.
- Lack of funding and expertise/support are barriers.
- How generalisable are the SWAST protocols?
- Chief investigators are often reluctant.
- SWATs do involve work, and for host trials teams too.
- How to demonstrate the value of a SWAT to others.



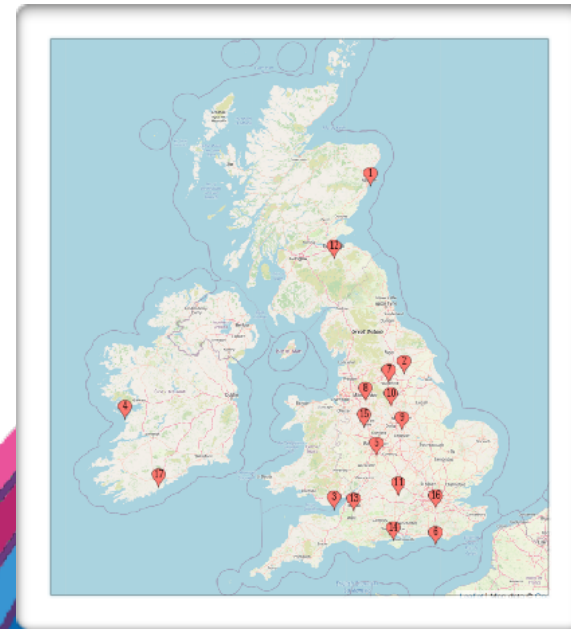
What sort of things have been raised #2

- Lots of suggestions for how the SWAT repository could be improved.
- SWAT evaluations only have small benefits.
- Ethical/sponsor approval can be challenging.
- What are the priority SWATs?
- More weight on the value of qualitative SWATs.



What next?

- We need to finish discussions with teams and collate the feedback.
- Network meeting on 2nd Nov 2021.
- We'll get a list of some priority SWATs.
- I hope we can pick a few key areas to focus on in 2022.



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