

GUIDES TO UNDERTAKING RESEARCH

Introduction to the Research Guides: RNSH SERT Institute

These Research Guides are intended as a how-to guide for those who either want to run a new research project or to participate in one. It is chiefly aimed at surgeons, surgical students and physicians in related disciplines, but the themes and practicalities of doing any kind of research are common to most disciplines, so we hope it is of wider use. It is divided into short articles or vignettes that address a specific research topic or question. Since we aim to provide an informative picture for each subject these short articles are mostly around a thousand words in length, that being the commonly accepted text equivalent of a picture.

The guides articles provide concise answers to questions that we at the SERT Institute were asking when we were naïvely starting out as researchers, as well as questions we did not ask back then but should have.

One of the main purposes of the RNSH SERT Institute is to provide support to surgeons that are undertaking continuing education, research, training and other academic activities. Surgeons are always time-poor and stressed running their busy schedules but love their craft and are highly motivated to improve it and get better outcomes for their patients. It is very important to undertake high quality robust research that will improve patient care, just as research done by previous generations of surgeons and medical researchers have created the therapies we use now. Such research has another practical use: that of training young surgeons in scientific methods, since evidence-based healthcare is clearly superior to evidence-free healthcare. Much the same, of course, can be said of practitioners in other medical disciplines.

To advance this vital endeavour we therefore assembled here these Research Guides to important aspects of research and related activities, for running projects, dealing with the data that is obtained and analysed, and communicating the results. These Research Guides are intended, over time, to be expanded and extra topics added, with more graphical and multimedia resources produced over time. We hope they will in this way continue to evolve, develop and improve their usefulness to surgeons, students and those with an interest in clinical research.

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