

## **Teaching High School Students about Clinical Trials**

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Stacey McKoy is a teacher at Innovation High School in Jersey City and a participant in the Rutgers Youth Enjoy Science (RUYES) program. As part of a unit on Human Research and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process, Ms. McKoy wanted to teach her Bioethics classes about clinical trials. On January 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Community Nurse Navigator Michelle Ashley (Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey) and Clinical Research Coordinator Davina Hobson (Jersey City Medical Center) collaborated to give Ms. McKoy's classes a virtual presentation on Clinical Trials and the Research Process.

Students learned about the history of clinical trials, their types and phases, some barriers to participation, and the importance of diversity among trial participants. At the end of the presentations, a post feedback survey showed that 94% of the students had a better understanding of clinical trials. Overall, about 56% of students indicated that they would be interested to learn more about clinical trials if offered to them or a family member, with an additional 40% stating that they might be interested.

The following week students were given a mini project to share what they learned about clinical trials and the research process with at least three family members and/or friends. Students reviewed the presentation notes from the guest speakers and selected sections to share with their audience. Students created a questionnaire using similar pre and post questions, as well as their own using Google forms or text messaging. They also recorded the concerns that their family members and friends had about clinical trials. Some students translated selected sections into Spanish or Vietnamese so that their parents could participate. Students did either in-person or virtual presentations via ZOOM and then presented their results to the whole class.



Before presenting, students stated that most of their family members or friends indicated that they would not participate in a clinical trial. Some of the concerns cited were drug safety, risk of side effects, length of the trial, and not being able to leave the trial if they chose to. However, after sharing the presentation to address their concerns at least 1 out of every 3 family members indicated that they would participate in a clinical trial.

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