

Placebo-controlled studies are a way of testing a medical therapy in which, in addition to a group of subjects that receives the treatment to be evaluated, a separate control group receives a sham “placebo” treatment which is specifically designed to have no real effect. Placebos are most commonly used in **blinded** trials, where subjects do not know whether they are receiving real or placebo treatment. Often, there is also a further “natural history” group that does not receive any treatment at all.

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