Health and Medicine

**Task One:** *Mark the stresses on the vocabulary below*

Anti-depressants placebo pharmaceuticals

medications clinical trials journals rebuttal

regulatory psychiatrist psychiatric research (n) concealment

**Task Two:** *Mark the tone units (chunks) in the text below for the first paragraph.*

*Listen to check your chunking and note the differences in pronunciation in the speech of Professor Kirsch (US).*

*Presenter:* The biggest science story of the past week was the claim made that Prozac and other anti-depressant drugs don’t work. The joint study made by researchers in the UK, America and Canada examined all available data on the drugs, including results from clinical trials that the manufacturers chose not to publish at the time. When all the data was pulled together, it appeared that patients had improved, but those on placebo improved just as much as those on the drugs. This created a maelstrom of comment and rebuttal from doctors, patients and psychiatrists. So, do the drugs work or is at all in our heads? I spoke to Professor Irvin Kirsch of the University of Hull, one of the report’s authors, and asked him how the team dug out the data for the study.

*Professor Kirsch:* These were the data that the pharmaceutical companies sent to the US regulatory agency, the FDA, in the process of getting their medications licensed. And we used a law called the Freedom of Information Act, through which we were able to get the files from the FDA.

*Presenter:* Why do you think it is that pharmaceutical companies, you know, were not releasing these data. I mean, it might look to some on the outside that there might be some deliberate concealment involved.

*Professor Kirsch:* Well, this used to be standard practice – a company would do a study and then decide whether or not to submit it for publication and it’s true in many fields that some papers - those without significant results - often don’t get published in the journals. That’s changing now in the drug field; there are … clinical trials are now being registered and I think in the future full data will be available, but in the past it has not been and we had to use the Freedom of Information Act in order to get it.

*Presenter:* Just thinking from the point of view of some of those test subjects who are involved in those trials. You know, they’re arguably taking a bit of a risk with themselves, they’re taking an untested medicine and the bargain that they’re making is that they want to make it a contribution, I guess, to humanity in a sense, to advance the course of knowledge, and yet from some of those trials the data were not being released for everyone to look at. I mean, isn’t that a bit of a betrayal?

*Professor Kirsch:* Well, I don’t think that was the only motivation of the participants in the trial for taking part in it. They were also offered the opportunity to get a treatment that may benefit them in their … may benefit their condition. I do think it’s important that all the data be published and be made available, so let me be clear about that. And I think it was unfortunate that they were not and that it was so difficult to get hold of. I especially think it was unfortunate that the FDA decided to not mandate the disclosure, even on the labelling of the medications of the fact that not all of the trials were successful trials. But, be that as it may, that’s been standard practice in the past.

**Task Three:** *Based on the text, correct the statements, mark the contrastive stress and practise with a partner*

Example: The report says that Aspirin doesn’t work

*No, the report says that Prozac doesn’t work*

1. The researchers were from the UK, Finland and Canada.

2. Patients on placebo improved more than those on the drugs.

3. There was acceptance from doctors, patients and psychiatrists.

4. The US regulatory body is the FBA.

5. Clinical trials are not being registered.

6. The participants were involved purely to help others.

**Task Four:** *Do the same as in Task three based on the text below:*

**Record for blind ace Dave**



BLIND hero Dave Heeley finished his seventh marathon in seven days across seven continents in 5hrs 23mins.

He is the first blind person to complete the gruelling feat after runs in the Falkland Islands, Brazil, the US, Sydney, Dubai and Tunisia.

Dave, 50, of West Bromwich, West Midlands, ran each one with guide Malcolm Carr.

He said: “I’ve a few aches but the physiotherapists did an amazing job. I wasn’t worried about my time — I just wanted to complete it.”

* 676,763 - Number of runners who have finished the marathon since first race in 1981.
* £360m - Amount of cash raised for charities by marathon runners since that debut.
* 710,000 - Bottles of water drunk this year — 950 portable toilets were laid on.
* 9 - Runners who have died trying to complete the 26.2 mile course.