

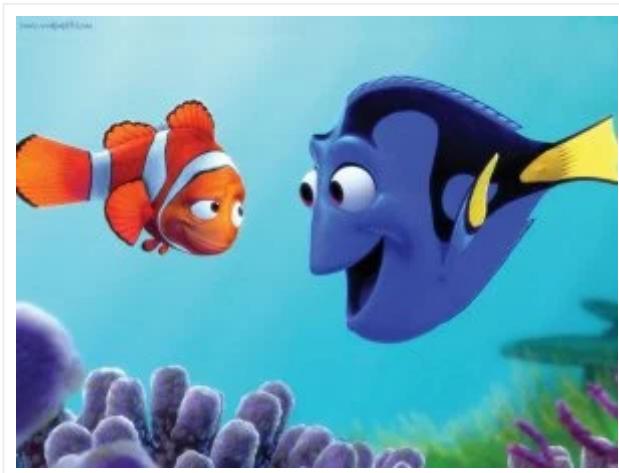
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## HUMANITIES AND HEALTH

# "ASK DORY"- A MUCH NEEDED HELP TO FIND PERSONALIZED CLINICAL TRIALS ONLINE.

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More and more patients are turning to the internet to look for a second medical opinion, or for an experimental drug being tested in clinical studies that could help them if they fail standard drug treatment for their condition. In the past it was usually their specialists who would recommend participation in a clinical trial, or refer the patients to a research hospital nearby where clinical studies were conducted. With the advent of web 2.0 tools though it is becoming more and more common for the individual patients or their families to surf the internet looking for active, recruiting clinical trials that may suit them. In the US patients look up on '[Clinicaltrials.gov](#)' (the NIH-based website), while in Europe the clinical trials' portal is the '[EU clinical trials register](#)' which was just launched this March. Such websites contain huge amount of information which is often difficult to access and understand for the average patient who is overwhelmed by the maze of information written in scientific and medical jargon. '[Dory](#)' will help the patient to get out that kind of impasse. Dory is an online interactive tool that asks the patients personalized questions and help them find the right clinical trial near them.



— Nemo & Dory

I tried that myself, inserting "asthma" as a medical condition. I was then asked to enter my zipcode and how far I would be willing to travel to participate in a clinical study (options range from less than 5 miles to entire country, ie the US). I inserted a middle-way option of less than 50 miles and a zipcode of Marin County (north

of San Francisco) and I retrieved 10 clinical trials, subdivided by early and late phase of development. The details of the study are displayed, with the relative mileage to drive and the approximate numbers of hours required, and the name and email of the principal investigator to contact to express interest in participation. Dory is a start up based in the Bay Area that was awarded 10,000 \$ to continue development as a semifinalist prize of the **Developer Challenge** at the Health 2.0 conference in San Francisco. The competition aims at fostering innovation for projects aimed at using public data for cancer prevention and control, and it is a joint initiative of the **National Cancer Institute** and **America Competes Act**. Ask Dory is one of the four semifinalists who are receiving each 10,000 \$ plus targeted feedback to develop further their projects and will compete in a second round of the challenge with deadline in November, that will award two semifinalists and 20,000 \$ each.

For now Dory is helping only patients based in the US (as it uses data derived from ClinicalTrials.gov), but hopefully other inventive and innovative people will take the model and develop it for a EU-based public, using EU-based data.

PS If you don't remember, 'Dory' is the name of the fish that Nemo used to ask lots of questions, to which Dory cheerfully replied by singing: "**Just keep swimming, just keep swimming...**"

This entry was posted in **Health Policy and Sociology** and tagged **America Competes Act**, **Ask Dory**, **Clinical Trials**, **health 2.0**, **NCI**, **Nemo**, **web 2.0** by **Peter Noble**. Bookmark the **permalink** [<https://blogs.kcl.ac.uk/humanitiesandhealth/2011/09/28/ask-dory-a-much-needed-help-to-find-personalized-clinical-trials-online/>].