

# Evidence-based therapy

- ▶ Systematic collation & appraisal of findings is indispensable for informed practice & policy making.
- ▶ But debate about & distrust of the principles of applying research evidence to change psychotherapy practice.
- ▶ Fears that unreliable or misleading evidence may be prematurely & simplistically applied.
- ▶ Even that the nature of psychotherapy is inimical to the research paradigms of evidence based medicine.

# Problems with RCT evidence

- ▶ The RCT drug metaphor breaks down at a number of points.
  - ▶ Therapist and patient cannot be blinded to the intervention being delivered, and there are profound difficulties with placebo treatments in therapy.
  - ▶ The intervention can never be entirely specified or standardised - therapists are responsive to emergent issues, changing what is being delivered throughout the course of treatment

# So is evidence based therapy a special case or is there too much special pleading?

- ▶ Perhaps predictably, both statements are true to an extent.
- ▶ Evidence based therapy needs some modification of the rules of evidence based medicine, but Parry (2000) argues that these adaptations are few.
- ▶ Claims that psychotherapy, in any variant, is uniquely outside the discourse are insupportable.