

Supported by sanofi-aventis

**Iain K Crombie**

PhD FPHM Professor
of Public Health,
University of Dundee

Huw TO Davies

PhD Professor of
Health Care Policy
and Management,
University of St
Andrews

What is meta-analysis?

- **Meta-analysis is a statistical technique** for combining the findings from independent studies.
- Meta-analysis is most often used to assess the **clinical effectiveness of healthcare interventions**; it does this by combining data from two or more randomised control trials.
- Meta-analysis of trials provides a **precise estimate of treatment effect**, giving due weight to the size of the different studies included.
- The validity of the meta-analysis depends on the **quality of the systematic review** on which it is based.
- Good meta-analyses aim for **complete coverage of all relevant studies**, look for the **presence of heterogeneity**, and explore the robustness of the main findings using **sensitivity analysis**.

For further titles in the series, visit:
www.whatisseries.co.uk