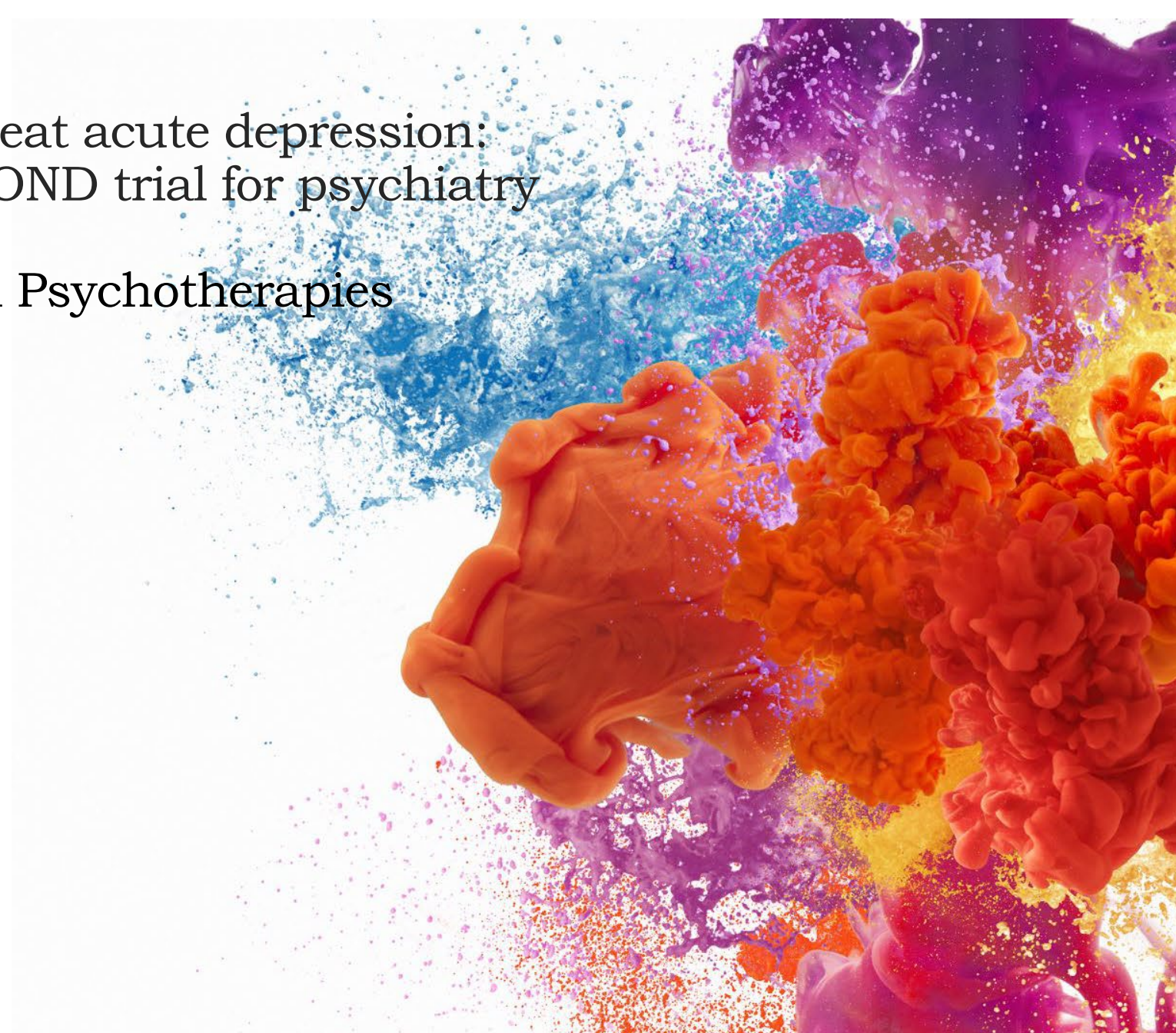


Mindfulness for difficult-to-treat acute depression: the implications of the RESPOND trial for psychiatry

Subtitle: Research in Medical Psychotherapies
Why? How ? Impact?

FLORIAN RUTHS

RESEARCH CONFERENCE MED PSYH
RCPSYCH 13TH OF JULY 2026



Declaration of Interest

FR private practice in London

FR on funded grant for RESPOND trial 2021-2024

TRIGGER WARNING



The content of this presentation may trigger strong emotions.



Please share in breaks if facilitators can support you if distress arises.



Please alert facilitators to special preferences.

Before Research – Why?

IMMANUEL KANT 1724 - 1804

What can I know?

What shall I do?

What can I hope for?

What is a human being?

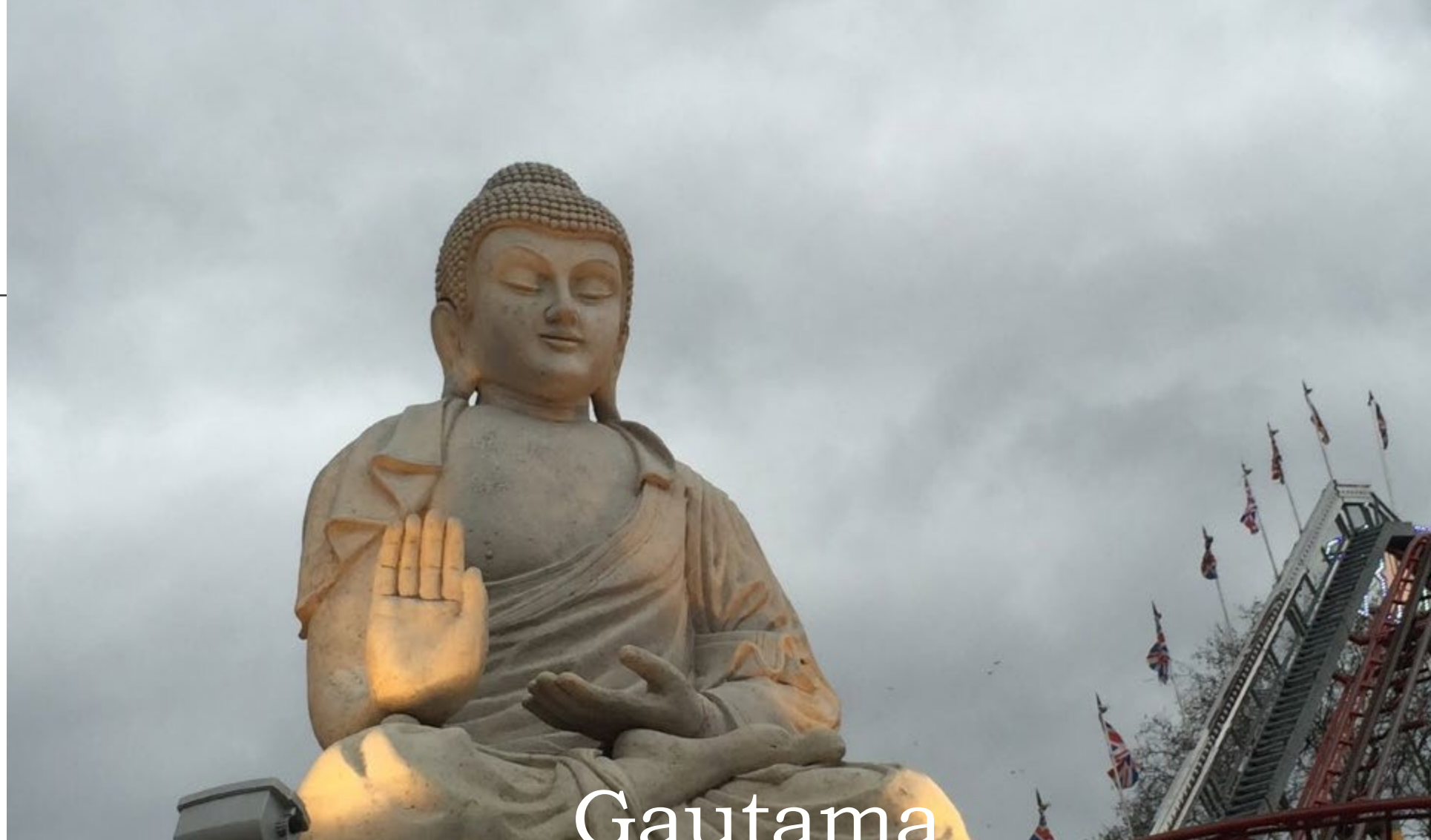


Before Research – How?

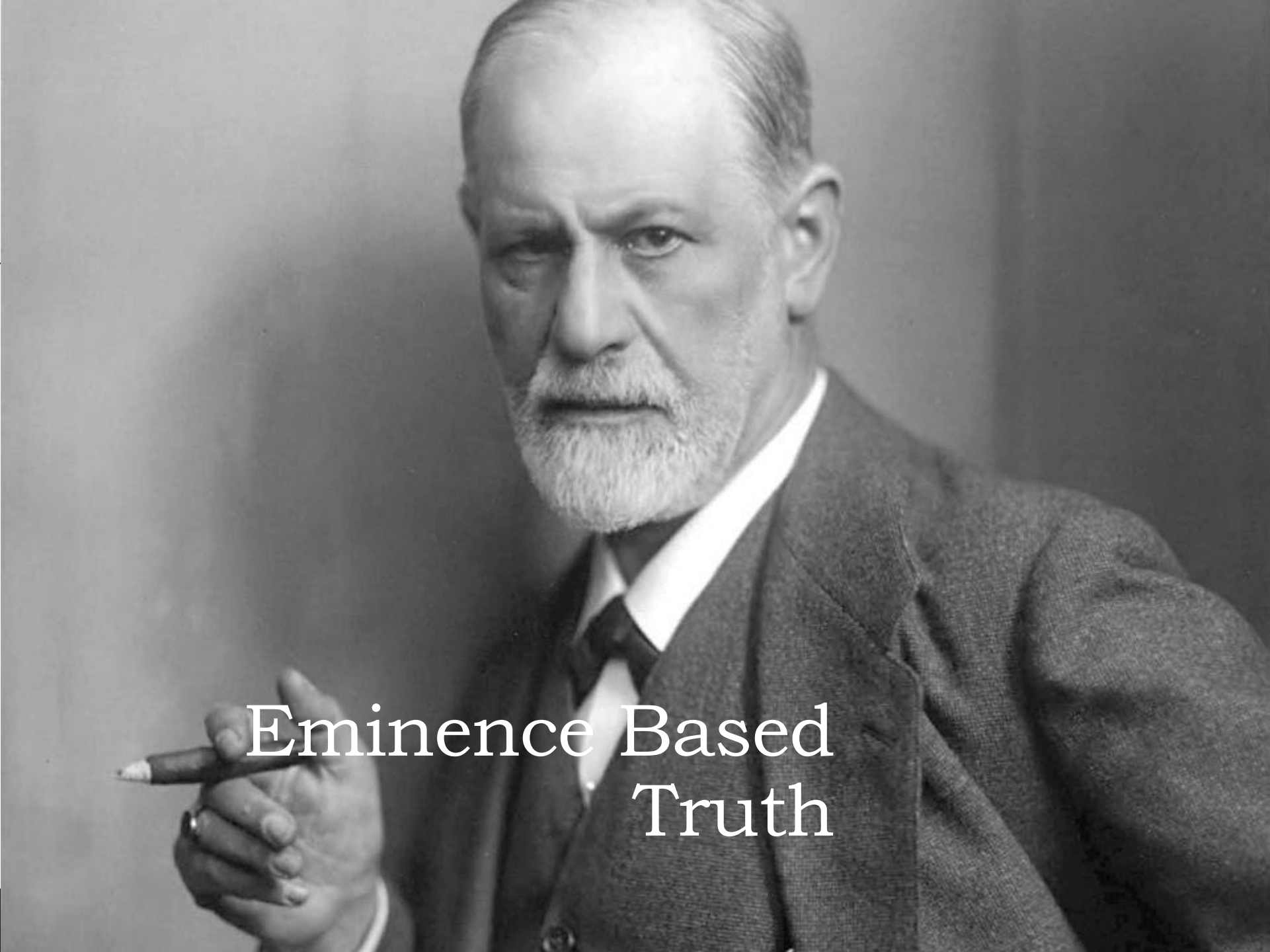
Eminence Based

Hermeneutics

Revelation-based

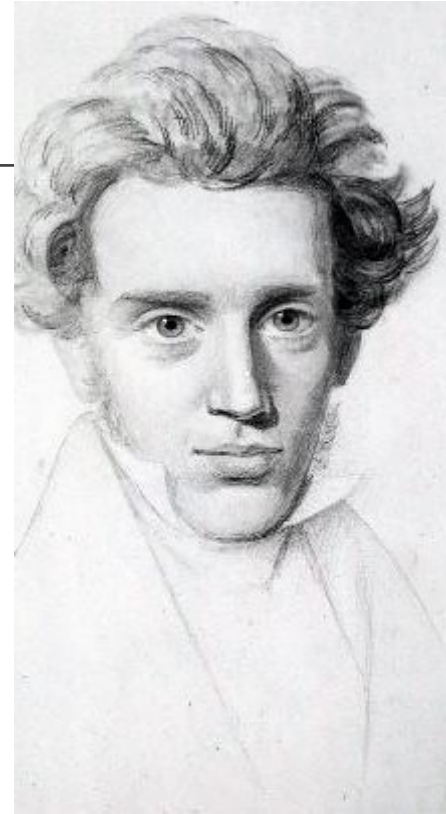


Gautama



Eminence Based
Truth

Existentially Based Truth



Existentially Based Truth

Søren Kierkegaard (1813 -1855)

Freedom, choice and responsibility to find the truth

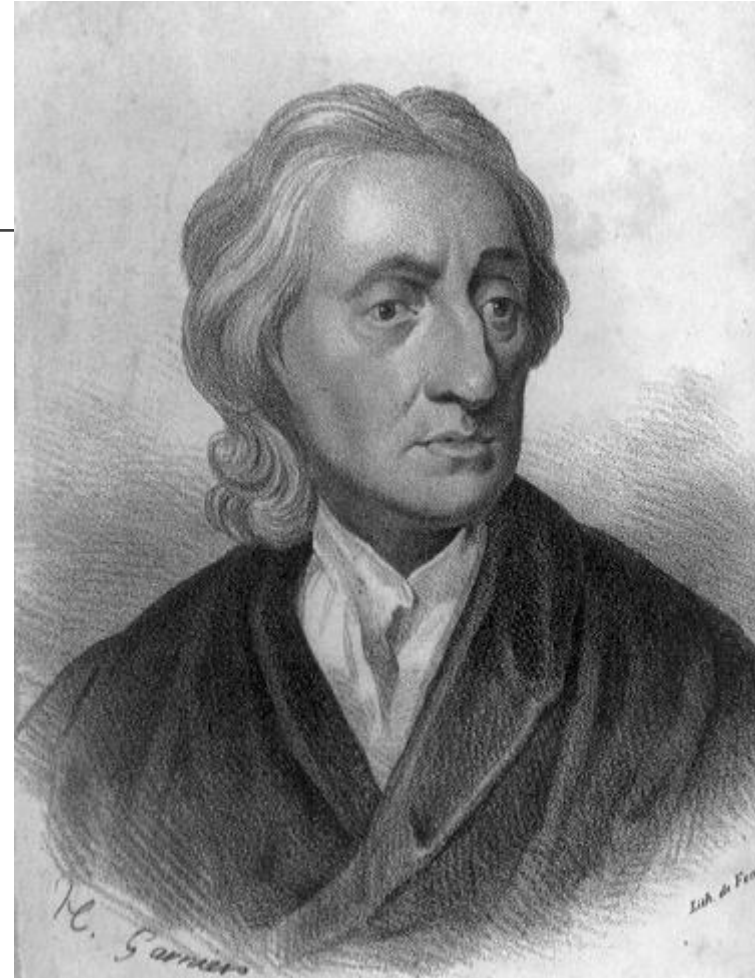
N=1

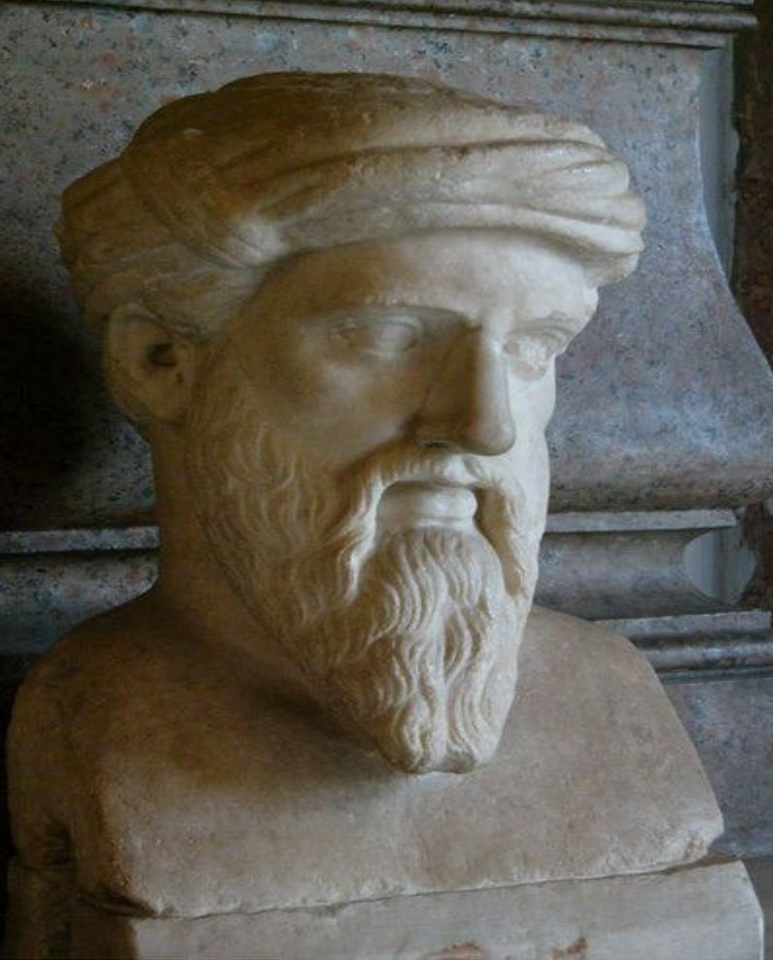
Qualitative assessment of experience

Evidence Based Truth

E.g. John Locke (1632 – 1704).

Basing Truth on falsifying hypotheses through experiments.





By The original uploader was Galilea at German Wikipedia. - Transferred from de.wikipedia to Commons.(Original text: Fotografiert am 30.03.2005), CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=171958>

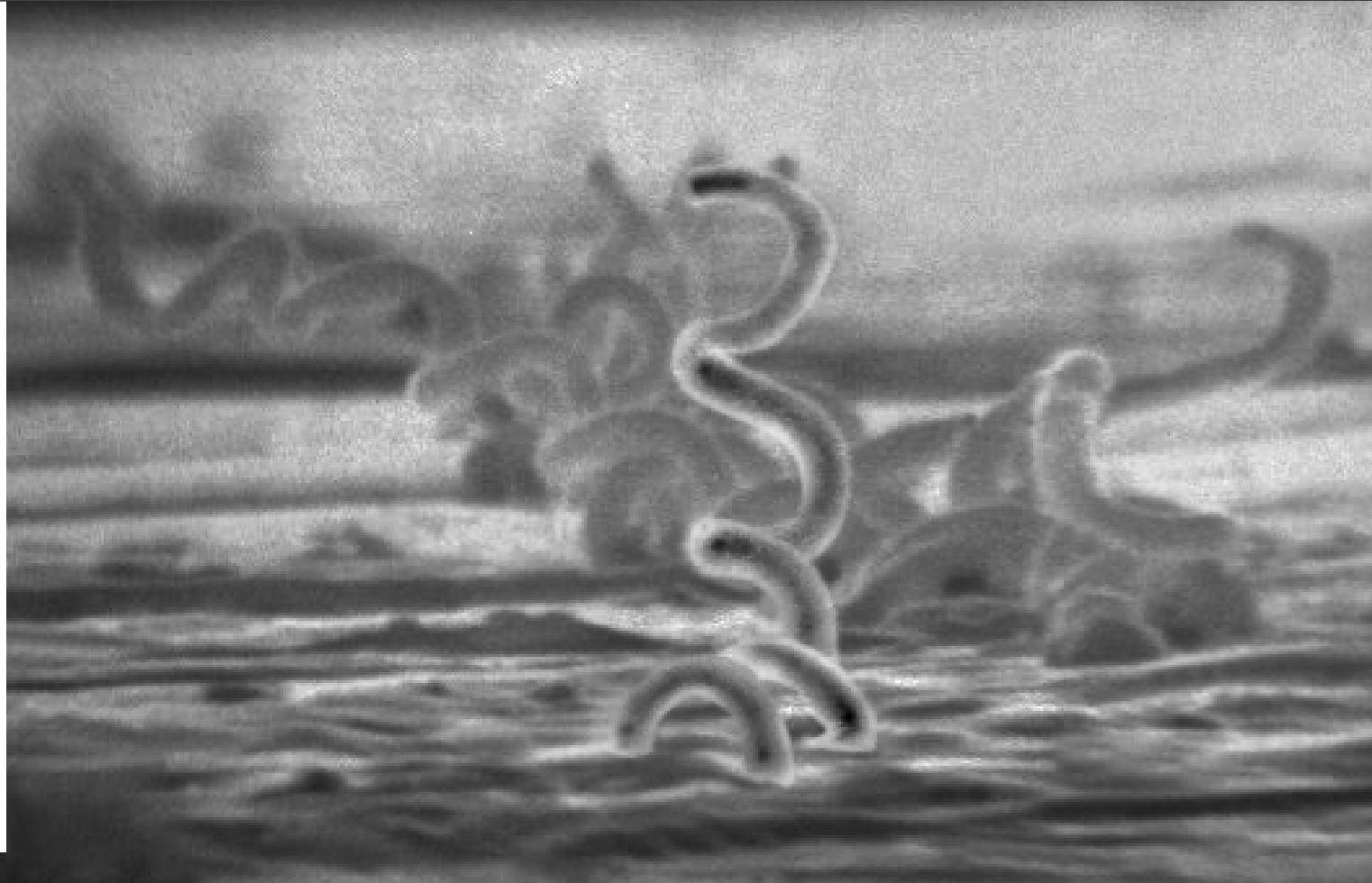
Pythagoras



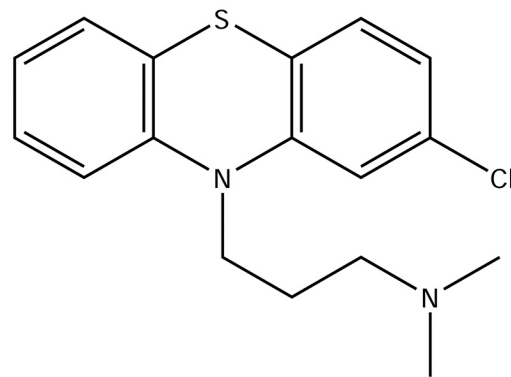


Napsbury Park Asylum

Treponema Pallidum



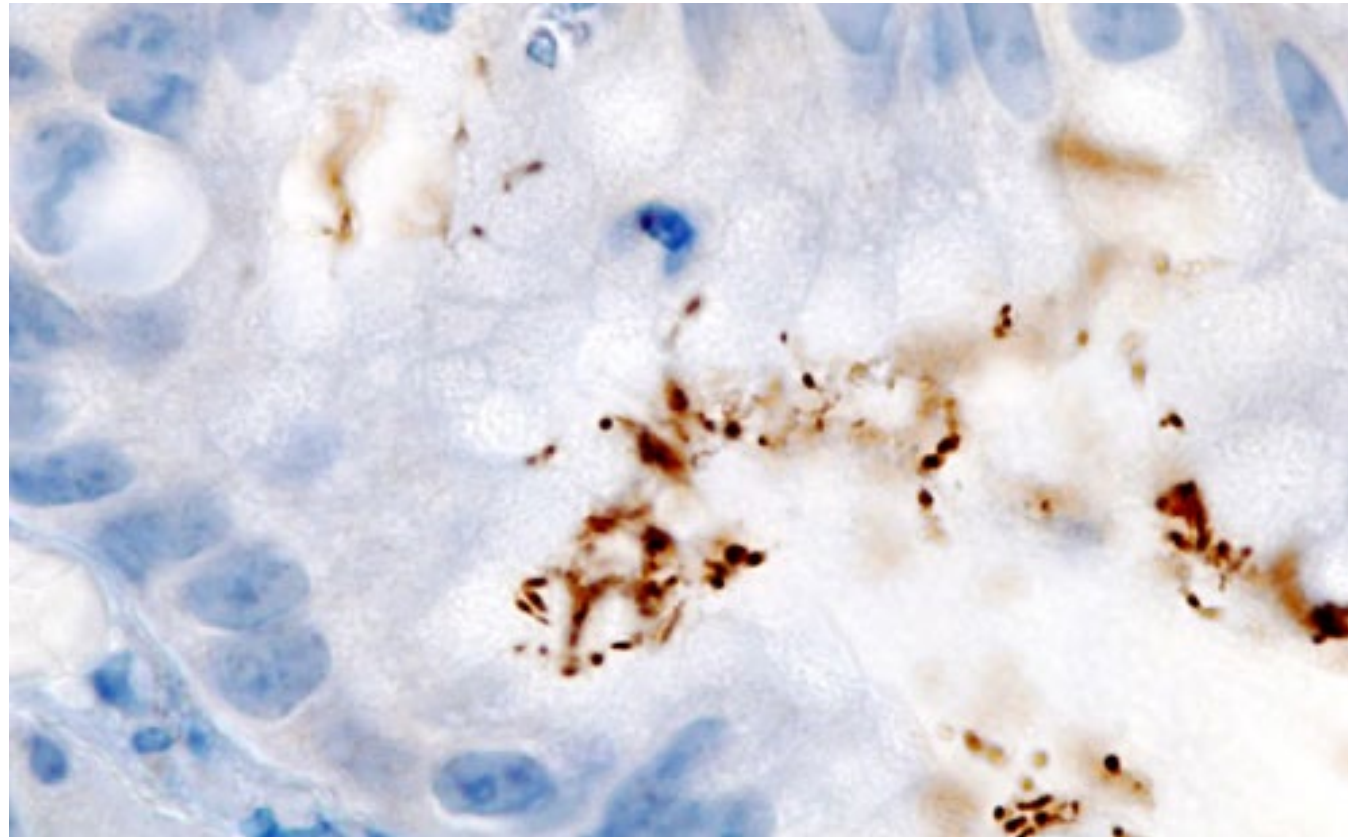
Chlorpromazine 1952



Psychosomatische Klinik Heidelberg



Psycho-somatics vs Helicobacter Pylori



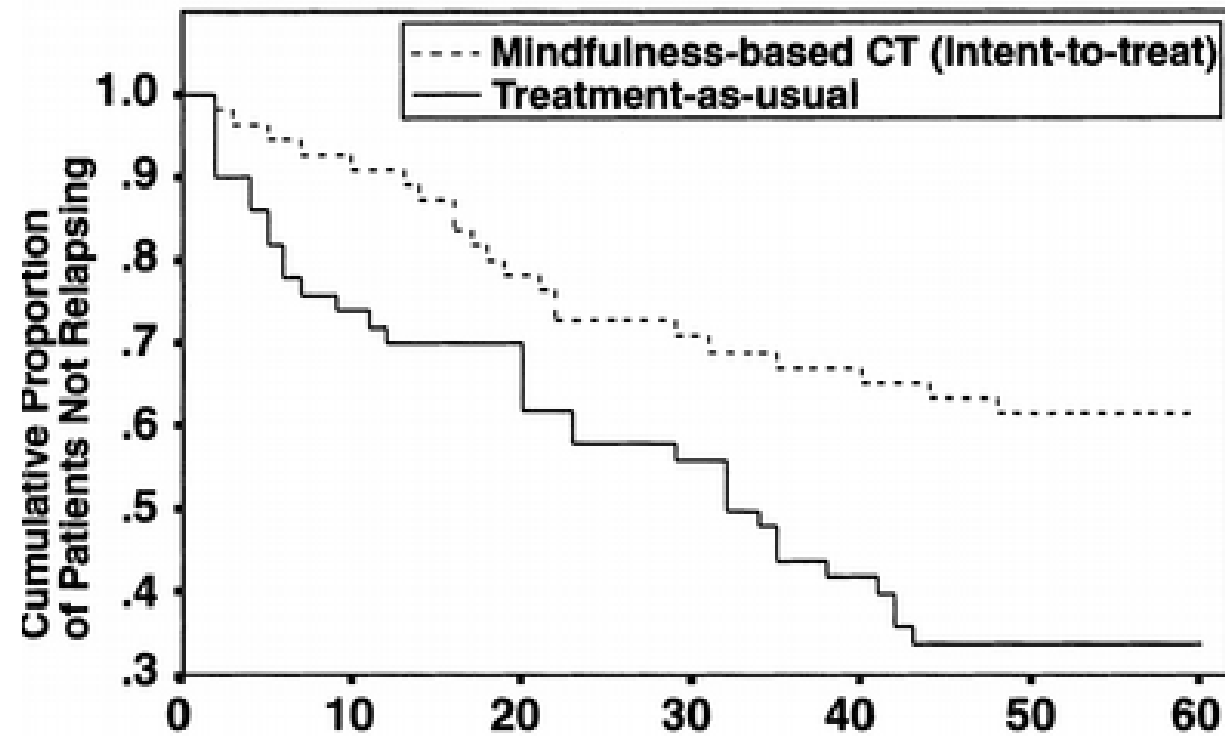
Doing Research

Courtesy of Prof Barnhofer 2018



Initial Trial (Teasdale, et al., 2000)

(courtesy of Prof Barnhofer)



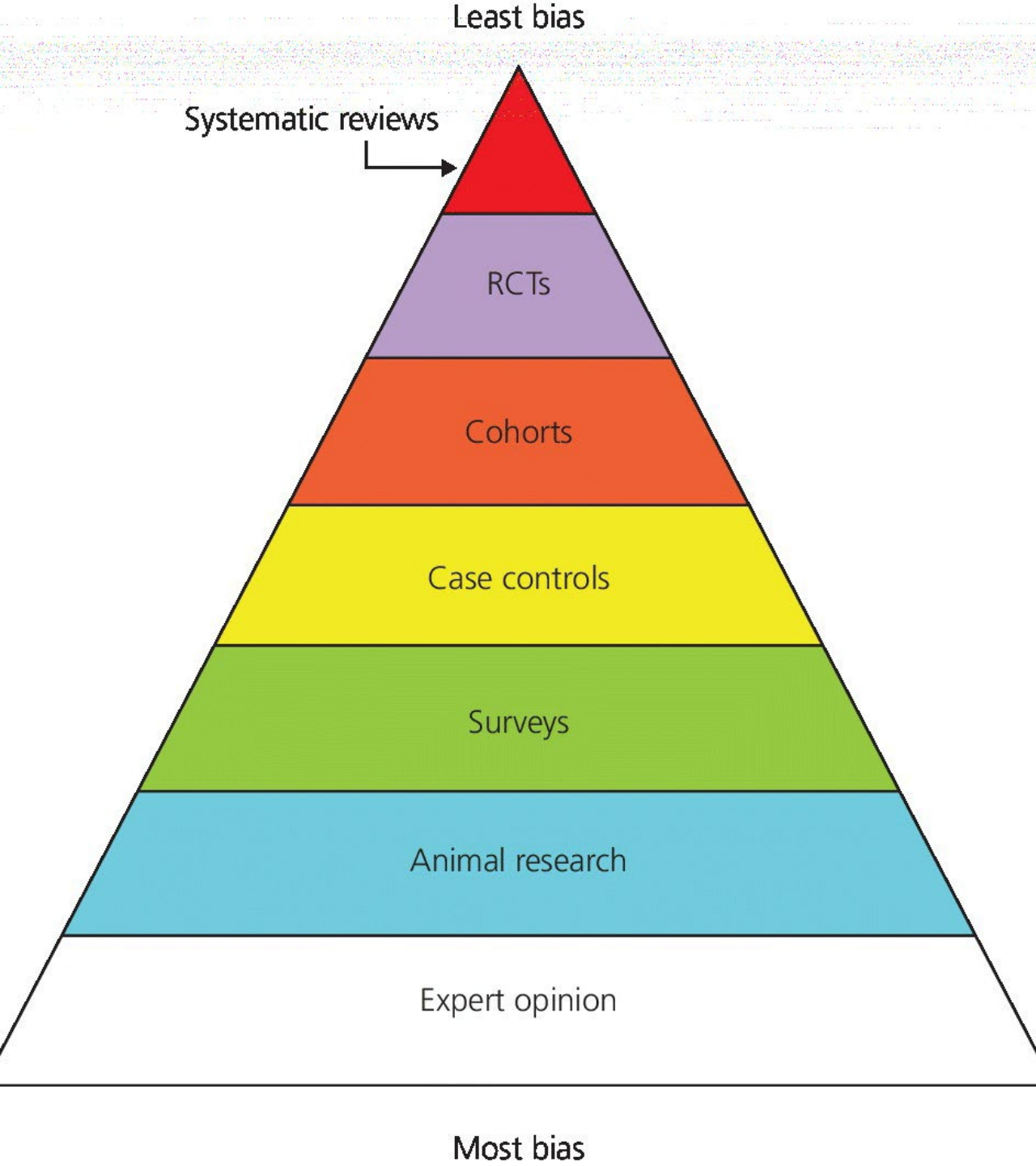
After Research

Has it made a difference?

What happens after research?

Process of Presentation

What is the impact?



Level of Evidence

What Is a Journal Impact Factor?

A journal's **impact factor** measures how often its recent articles are cited, on average.

It is the number of citations in a given year to articles a journal published in the previous two years, divided by the number of citable items published in those two years.

Example: 1,000 citations to 200 articles published over two years gives an impact factor of **5.0**.

It is published annually by Clarivate in the Journal Citation Reports, and a higher value signals greater citation influence within a field.

Limitations: values vary widely between disciplines, can be skewed by a few highly cited papers, and do not measure the quality of any single article or author.

Impact Factors: Leading Psychiatry Journals

World Psychiatry — **65.8**

Lancet Psychiatry — **24.8**

Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics — **17.4**

JAMA Psychiatry — **17.1**

American Journal of Psychiatry — **14.7**

Molecular Psychiatry — **10.1**

Biological Psychiatry — **9.0**

Source: Journal Citation Reports 2024 (Clarivate); two-year Journal Impact Factor.

Impact Factors: Journal Comparison

BMJ (British Medical Journal) — **42.7**

British Journal of Psychiatry (BJPsych) — **7.6**

Mindfulness — **3.5**

British Journal of Psychotherapy — **0.4**

International Journal of Psychoanalysis — **0.9**

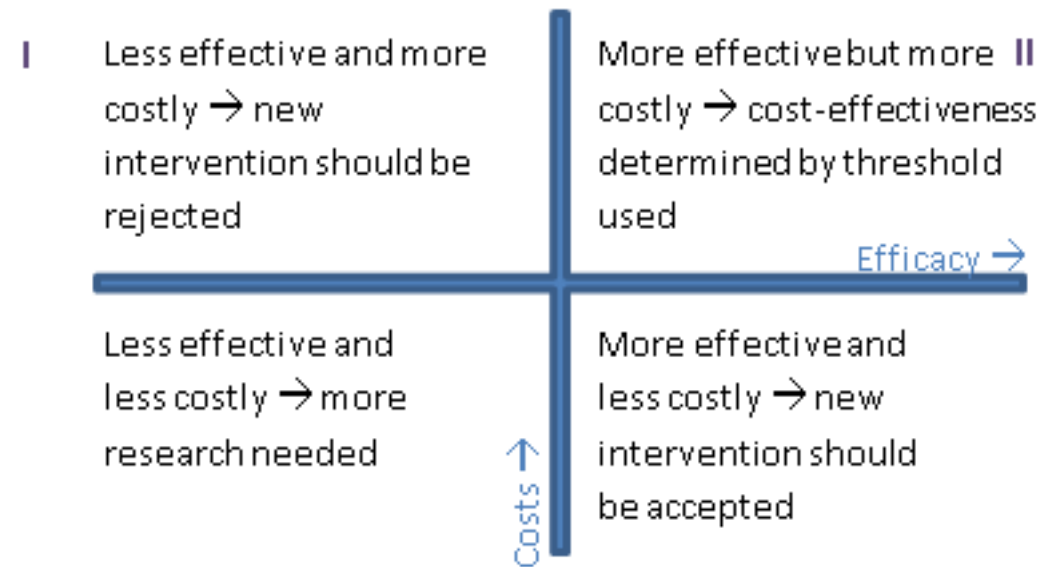
Source: Journal Citation Reports 2024 (Clarivate); two-year Journal Impact Factor. The British Journal of Psychoanalysis is not indexed in Web of Science, so no Impact Factor is assigned.

QALY Worth

In short, a 'quality-adjusted life year' (QALY) is one year in 'perfect' health. A year of poor health, for example being in pain or bedridden, would have a value of less than one QALY, such as 0.5.

The UK Treasury's guide to investment appraisal, the Green Book (HM Treasury, 2020) currently values one QALY at £60,000

Health Economics



rants:

NICE (NG222) recommendations for MBCT in Depression:

- **For New, Less Severe Episodes:** MBCT is now a recommended alternative psychological treatment for a new episode of less severe depression, alongside other options like CBT or antidepressants.
- **For Relapse Prevention:** It remains a strong recommendation for preventing future depressive episodes in individuals who have recovered from recurrent depression.
- **What it is:** An 8-week program combining mindfulness (paying attention to the present moment) with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) techniques to understand and change negative thinking patterns.
- **Delivery:** Typically delivered in groups, requiring commitment to daily home practice.
- **Availability:** Efforts are underway (through [Health Education England](#) and IAPT) to increase the availability of trained MBCT teachers in the NHS.

Nice Guidance NG 212

3/2022 : Well-Being in The Workplace

1.6 Individual-level approaches

“1.6.4 Offer all employees (or help them to access) mindfulness, yoga or meditation on an ongoing basis. This can be delivered in a group or online, or using a combination of both. ”

1.7 Approaches for employees who have or are at risk of poor mental health

“Recommendation 1.7.4:

For employees who want further support, offer (or provide access to):

cognitive behavioural therapy sessions or

mindfulness training or

stress management training.

If employees choose not to have an intervention now, tell them that the offer will still be available in the future if they reconsider. ”

Before Research

“Difficult-to-Treat” Depression (DTD)

Depression often persists despite multiple evidence-based treatments → ongoing functional impairment, reduced quality of life, and increased morbidity

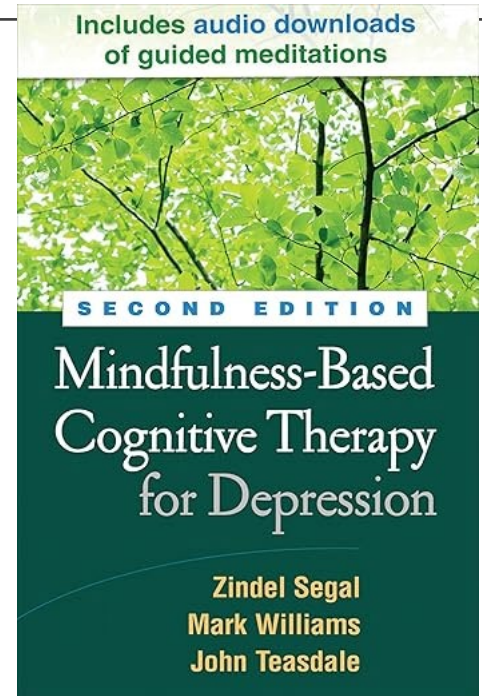
DTD acknowledges heterogeneity and recognizes that longterm management often requires a multi-modal and personalized approach

Why consider Psychological Therapy in DTD?

Many patients express a preference for psychological treatments

Psychological treatments can serve an important role in helping patients better understand their condition and provide skills for managing the illness

Why Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT; Segal, Williams, Teasdale, 2022, 2013)?



Skills training with origins in relapse prevention

Targeting cognitive reactivity and maladaptive thinking patterns

Increasing awareness, intentionality, self-regulation and changing relationships to difficult thoughts and emotions

Developed specifically to address enduring vulnerability

Expansion from relapse prevention to current depression and more complex presentations

Doing Research

Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Difficult-to-Treat Depression RESPOND

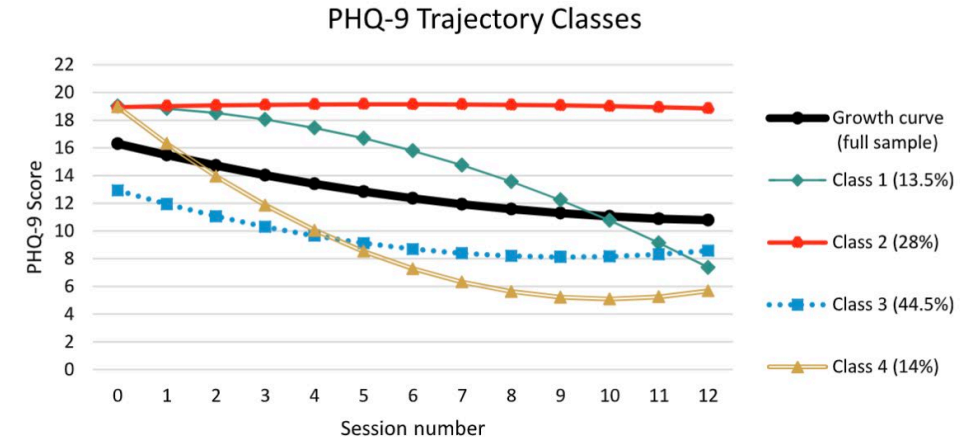
THORSTEN BARNHOFER/FLORIAN RUTHS

RESPOND RCT (Barnhofer et al., 2025, Lancet Psychiatry)

NHS Talking Therapies patients who did not reach remission after at least 12 sessions of high-intensity therapy

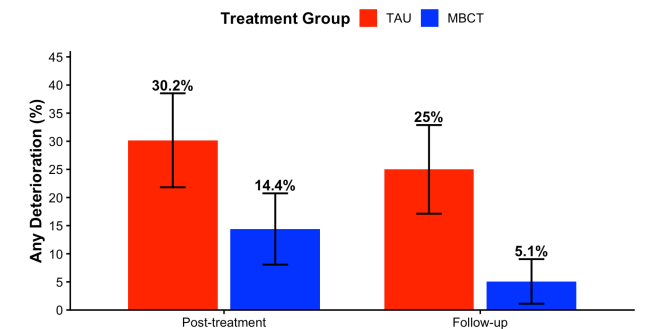
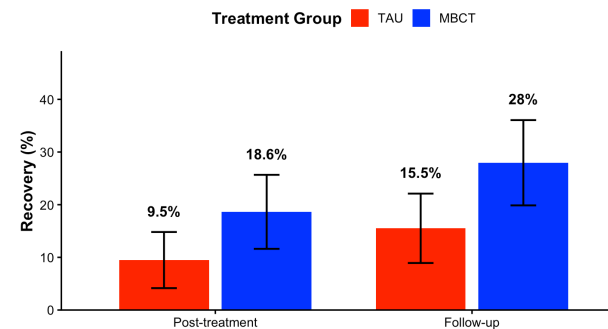
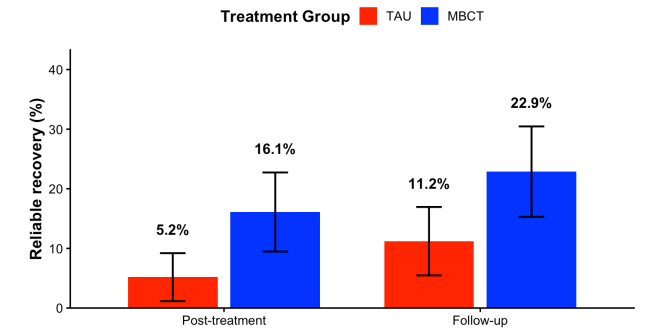
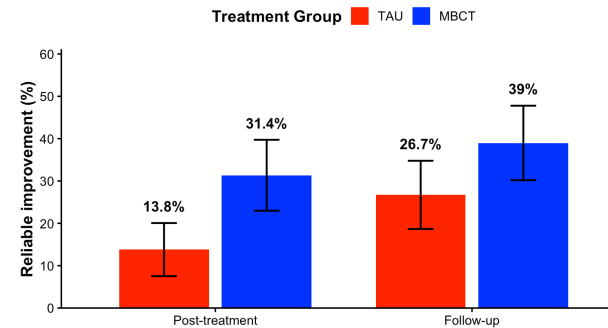
MBCT versus TAU (N= 234)

59% currently taking antidepressant medication



Saunders et al. (2019)

RESPOND: Clinical Effectiveness



SMD = -0.41 (95% CI -0.67 to -0.15)

Bootstrapping in Health Economics

Bootstrapping is a non-parametric resampling method used to quantify the uncertainty around cost-effectiveness results.

It repeatedly draws random samples, with replacement, from the observed patient-level cost and outcome data — each resample the same size as the original sample.

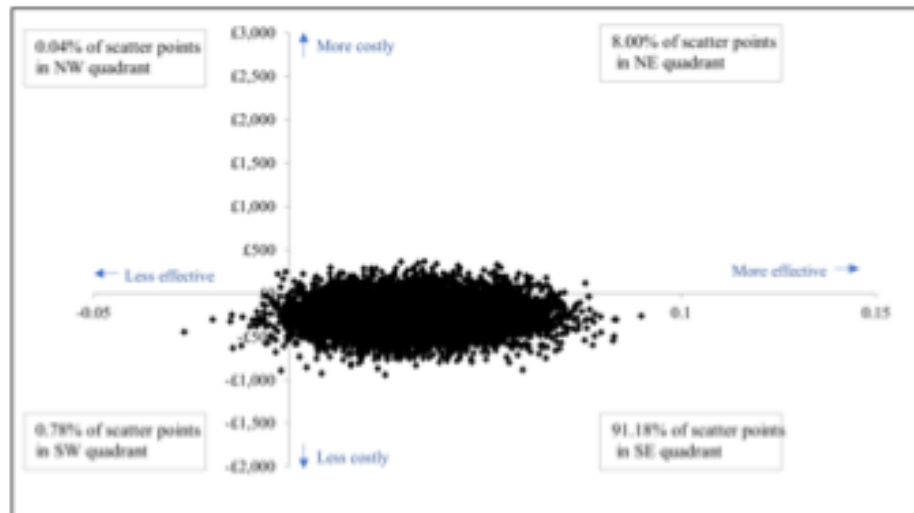
Each resample produces a fresh estimate of mean costs and effects; thousands of resamples build an empirical distribution of the **incremental cost-effectiveness ratio (ICER)**.

It assumes no particular distribution — valuable because health-care cost data are typically skewed rather than normally distributed.

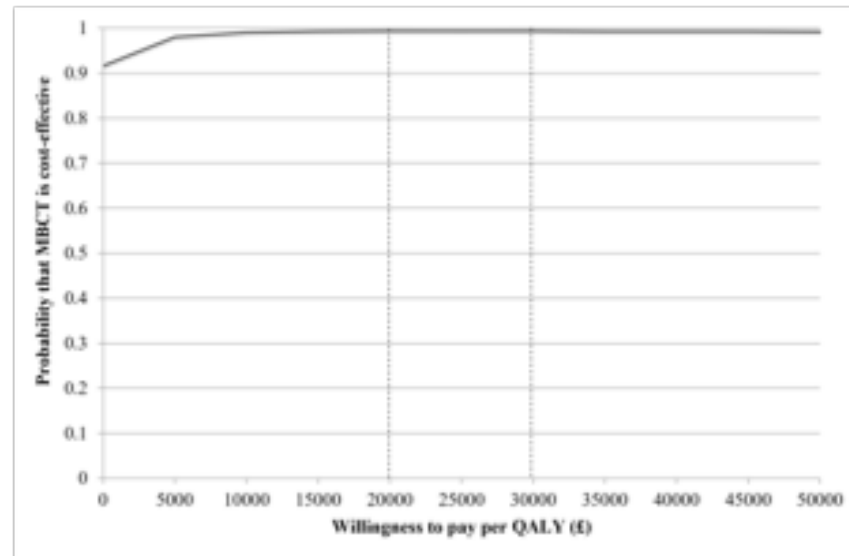
The resampled estimates populate the cost-effectiveness plane and underpin the **cost-effectiveness acceptability curve (CEAC)** and confidence intervals around the ICER.

RESPOND: Cost Effectiveness

A



B



Implications for Clinical Practice

1. DTD requires multimodal treatment
2. MBCT now has one of the strongest psychotherapy evidence bases in this population
3. MBCT should be routinely available as part of DTD pathways alongside pharmacological and other biological treatments

After Research

IMPACT OF RESPOND

Inclusion of MBCT for DTTD in NHS TT psychotherapeutic services?

In combination with a Meta-analysis of MBCT in DTTD, could RESPOND be assessed by NICE so NICE guidance on the use of MBCT could be reassessed?

The Case for Research

From eminence to evidence: research replaces opinion- and eminence-based practice with falsifiable, evidence-based truth.

It answers real clinical need: difficult-to-treat depression leaves patients impaired despite standard care, and only research shows what actually works.

It builds a credible evidence base: the RESPOND trial gave MBCT one of the strongest psychotherapy evidence bases in this population.

It demonstrates value: RESPOND showed not just clinical benefit but cost-effectiveness, which matters in a QALY-constrained NHS.

It drives policy and access: robust trials and meta-analysis can prompt NICE to reassess guidance and make effective therapies routinely available.

Bottom line: investing in research turns clinical questions into better, fairer, and more cost-effective care.

Relational Care: Balancing compassion with Self-Compassion

Mindfulness-based Cognitive Skill
Training Course for Doctors
(M4MD)



Thank you! Any Questions?

Florian.ruths@slam.nhs.uk

Mindfulness-based Cognitive Skill Training Course for Doctors (M4MD)



Impact Factors: Leading Medical Science Journals

Nature Reviews Drug Discovery — **101.8**

The Lancet — **88.5**

New England Journal of Medicine — **78.5**

Annals of Oncology — **65.4**

Journal of Clinical Oncology — **41.9**

Circulation — **38.6**

Annals of Internal Medicine — **15.3**

Source: Journal Citation Reports 2024 (Clarivate); two-year Journal Impact Factor.

Impact Factors: Leading Natural Science Journals

Nature Reviews Molecular Cell Biology— **81.3**

Nature Medicine — **58.7**

Chemical Reviews — **51.4**

Nature — **50.5**

Cell — **45.5**

Reviews of Modern Physics — **45.9**

Science — **44.7**

Source: Journal Citation Reports 2024 (Clarivate); two-year Journal Impact Factor.