Getting published in top journals – what *do* editors look for?

Dr Justine Davies

EiC *The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology*

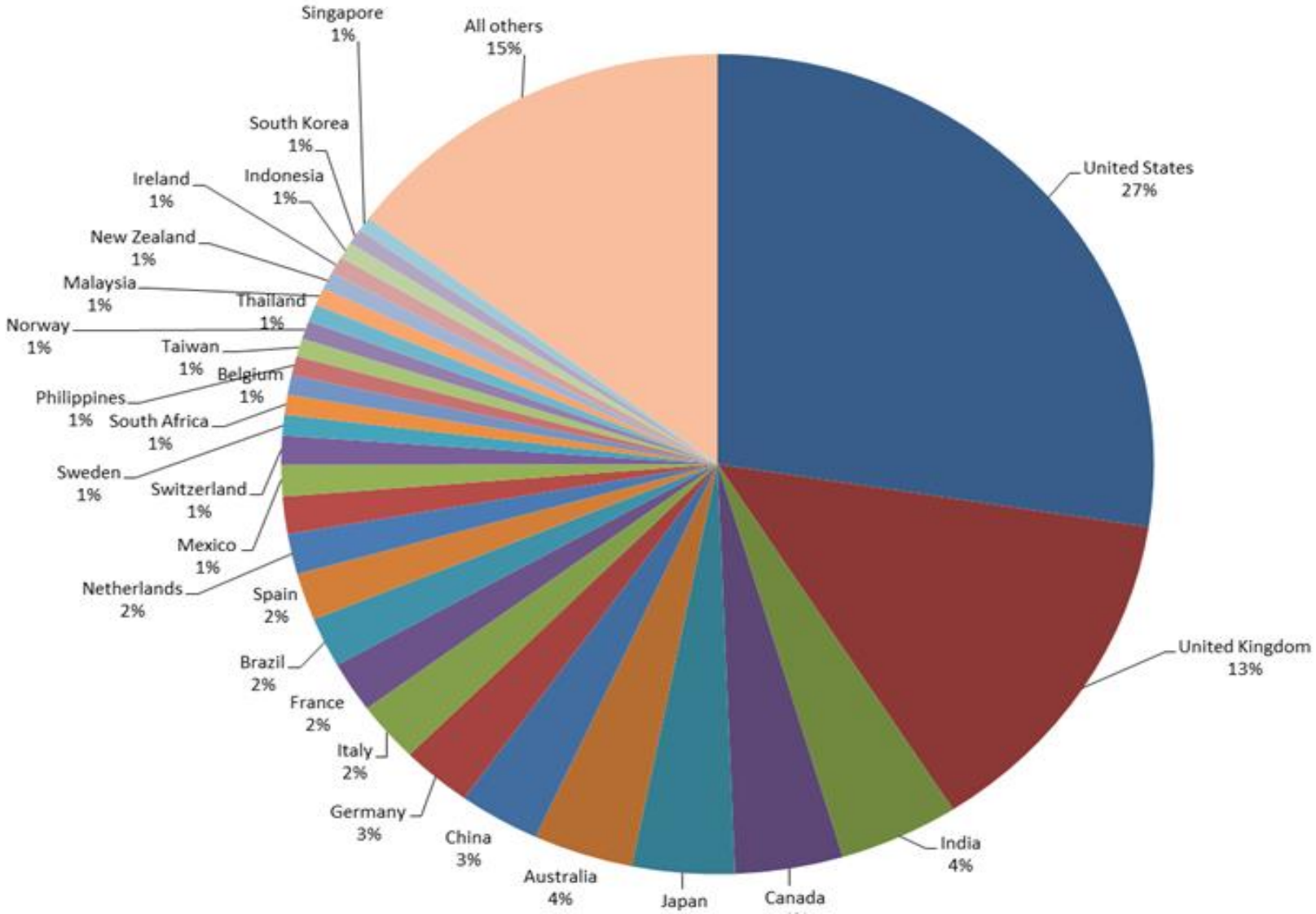
Topics to cover

- How a high impact medical journal works – example, The Lancet group
- What editors look for in a paper
- How we handle papers

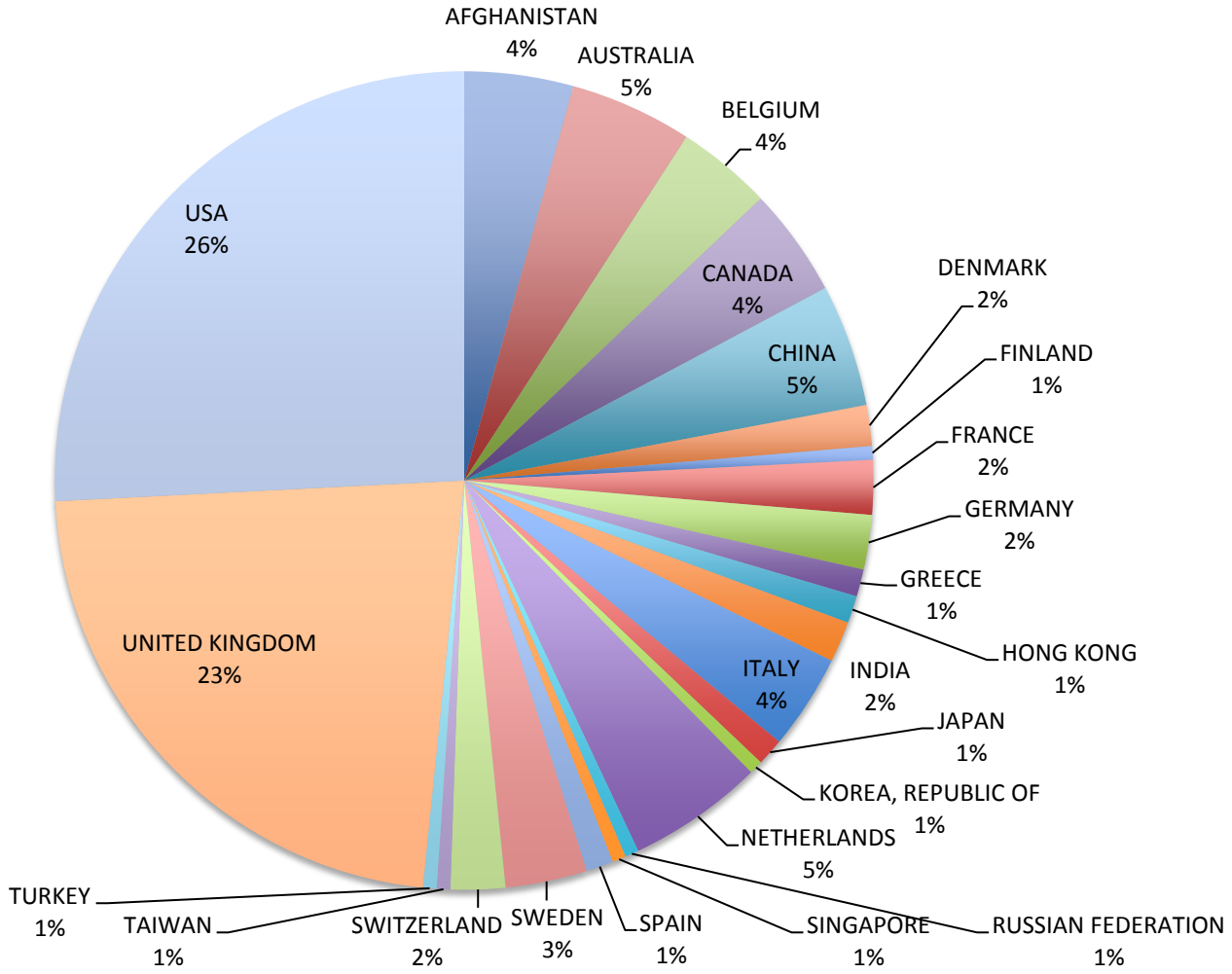
The Lancet editorial structure

- In house team of full time peer review editors
- In house team of assistant (copy) editors
- No external editorial staff (called assistant editors by other journals)
- External advisory board members
- 100 staff in total for The Lancet Group
- Based in London City

TheLancet.com Readers



Country of corresponding author for accepted articles for TL journals



Number of submissions per year

- The Lancet – circa 9000
- The Lancet Global Health – circa 1000
- The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology – circa 1000
- The Lancet Infectious Diseases – circa 1200

Number of manuscripts published per year

- The Lancet – circa 364
- The Lancet Global Health – circa 50
- The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology – circa 80
- The Lancet Infectious Diseases – circa 120

- Reject 90-96% of submissions
- Competition is high!!

So what do we do with submitted papers?

How we handle papers

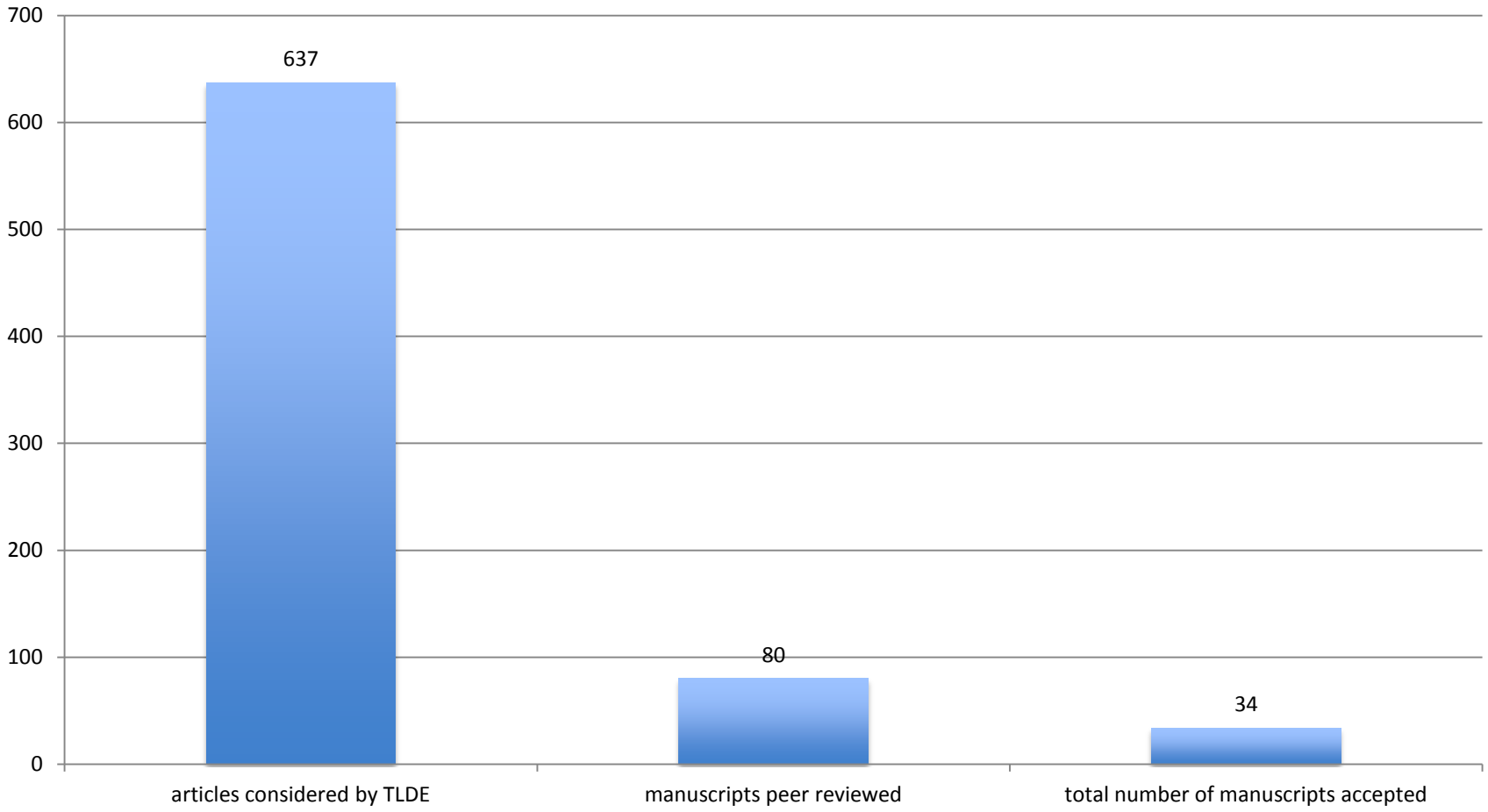
EIC first read

- EiC reads all submissions – quickly!
- Looking for

1) Correct subject area match for journal
2) Correct clinical orientation for journal
3) Question that study is trying to answer
4) Potential addition to field
5) Depth of study
6) Brief methodology
7) Second read and discussion for all those who pass first read

- I reject 50% of manuscripts after first read
- We reject 75% of manuscripts after first and second read

Manuscripts from submission to published



- Send out around 13% of articles
- Accept about 40% of those peer reviewed

“I regret to inform you……”

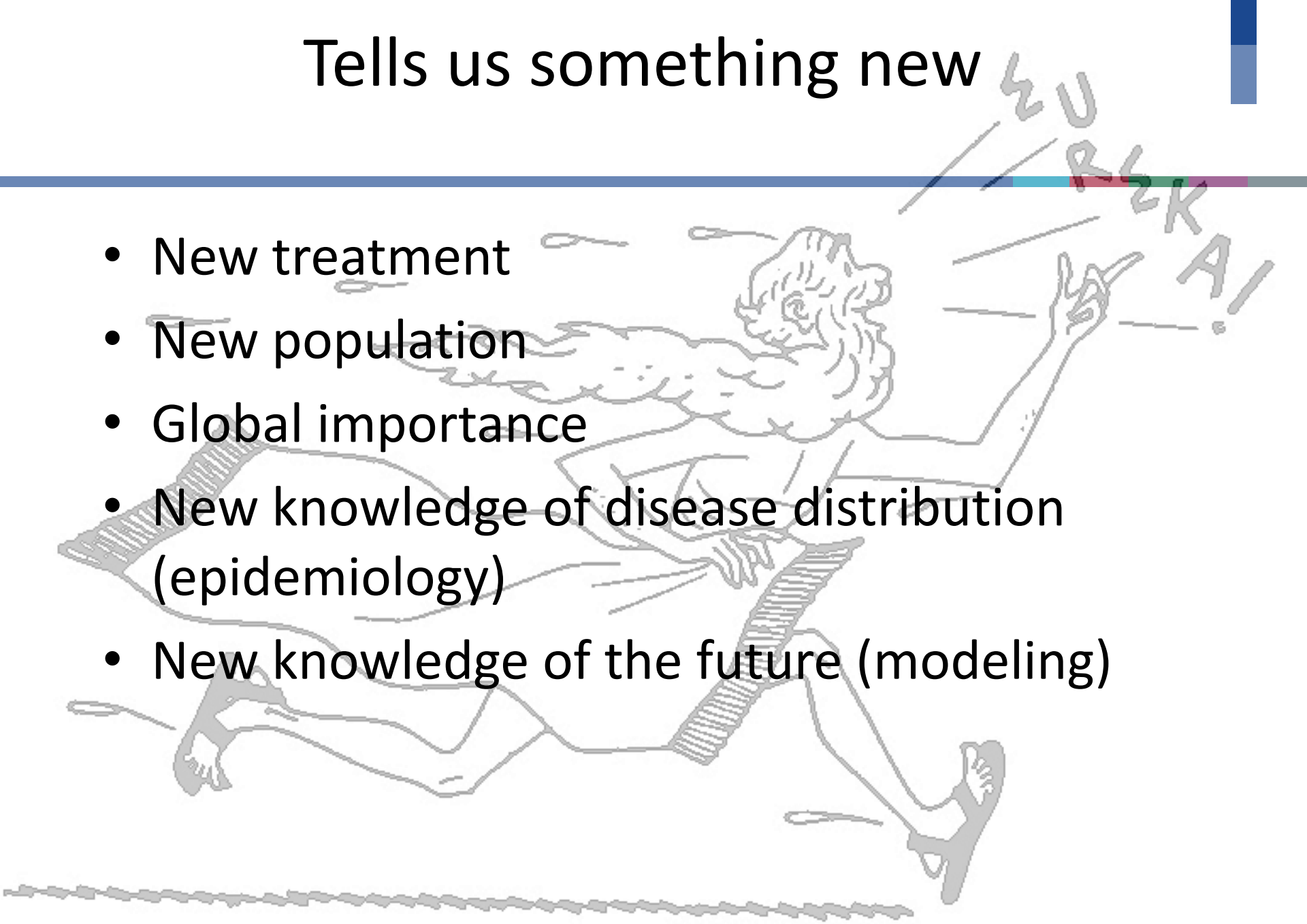
What are we looking for?

- Research that will have a proximate effect on patient care (disease management)
- Research that will change the way we prevent disease
- Research that will change the way in which we think about a disease (demography, epidemiology, pathophysiology)

What are we looking for?

- Randomised controlled trials (50%)
- Meta-analyses
- Epidemiology studies
- Modeling and prediction
- Risk – new risk factors
- Basic science

Tells us something new



- New treatment
- New population
- Global importance
- New knowledge of disease distribution (epidemiology)
- New knowledge of the future (modeling)

Conclusion

- If you want to get published in a top journal
- Don’t start thinking about how when you are due to write up
- Start thinking about how when you start planning your project
- Ask yourself – what elements will this journal want to see for me to be able to publish in it
- In that way you will
- 1) get published in a top journal
- 2) have an influential piece of work

Thank-you!