

We need more than words to understand the effects of a treatment

Because...

- Words can have different meanings for different people
- Verbal descriptions can be manipulative and misleading
- Harmful effects communicated through words are perceived as more dangerous than when numbers are used too

Warning signs

“Amazing effects...”

“Spectacular results...”

“Huge reduction of the risk...”

The effects of a treatment are not usually very big. We need numbers to really understand their size and importance.



- **Be cautious** if the effects of a treatment are described in extravagant language
- **Be interested** in the numbers supporting the verbal description of treatment effects
- **Remember** that words may be easier to understand than numbers, but they can mean different things for each person