

# Not all studied outcomes are equally important

## Because...

- The most important outcomes (treatment benefits and harms) are those that are of most concern to the patient
- Direct measures (number of heart attacks) are more important than indirect measures (cholesterol levels)
- Short-term effects may be less important than long-term effects

## Warning signs

Is this effect important **to me**?  
What can happen in the **long term**?  
Have the **potential harms** been measured?

To assess the importance of the outcomes that are measured in a study, it may be useful to ask ourselves these questions

- **Don't be misled** by conclusions based on indirect outcomes
- **Ask yourself** whether the studies address the outcomes you are most concerned about
- **Consider** whether long-term effects of the treatments have been studied

