

Why do the results of MLD therapy in practice differ from those found in research studies?

ROBERT HARRIS, HND, RMT, CLT-LANA

DIRECTOR, DR. VODDER SCHOOL - INTERNATIONAL,
DR. VODDER ACADEMY - INTERNATIONAL

Clinical Experience vs Published Results

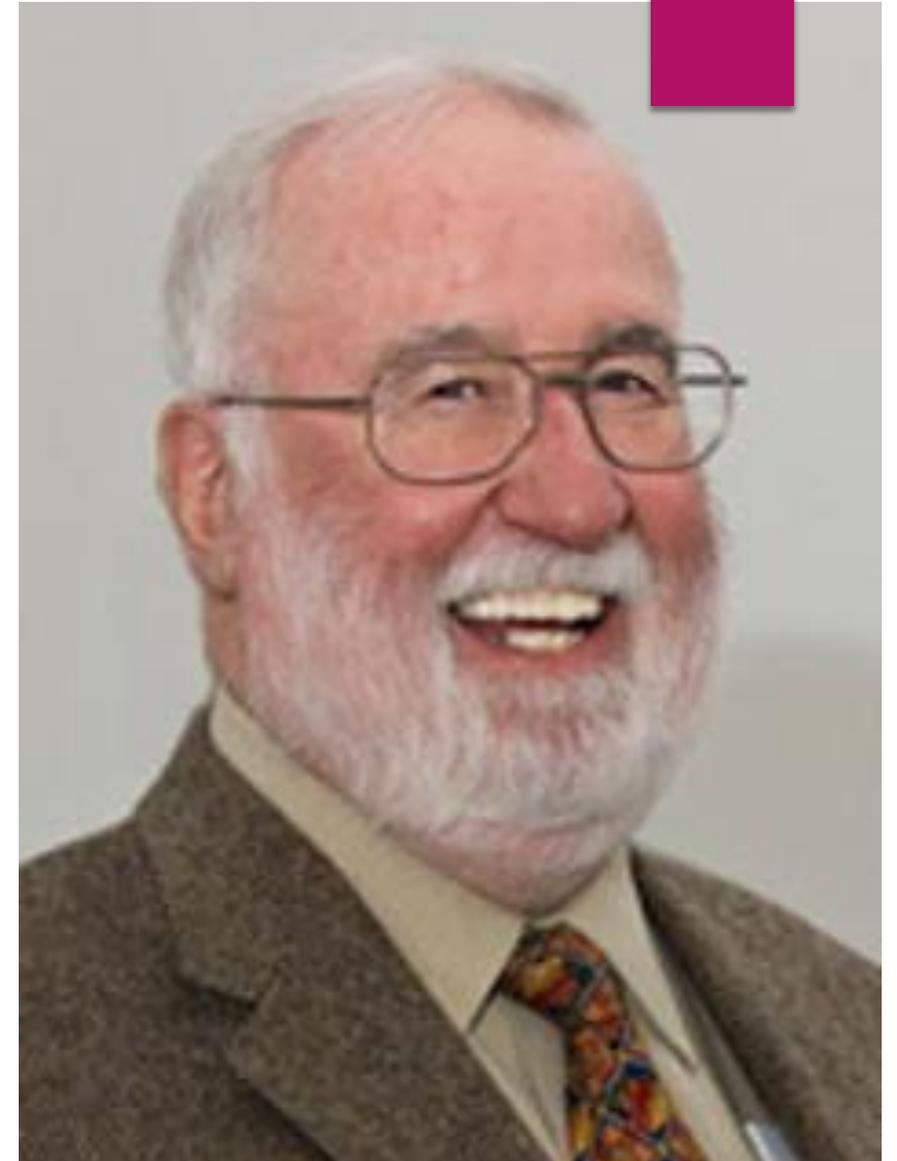


Gaps between what we do as therapists and what is published in the literature

Design of research studies

BMJ 1996; 312:71-72: Evidence based medicine:
what it is and what it isn't

- ▶ Canadian physician David Sackett (1934 – 2015)
- ▶ Professor at McMaster University
- ▶ Pioneered Evidence-Based-Medicine (EBM)
- ▶ Based on evaluating the quality of the best available research through a hierarchy of studies



Design of research studies

Sackett's rules

- ▶ **Meta-analyses-Systematic reviews**
- ▶ **Randomised controlled trials**
- ▶ **Cohort studies**



Design of research studies

Sackett's rules

- ▶ Case-control studies
- ▶ Case reports



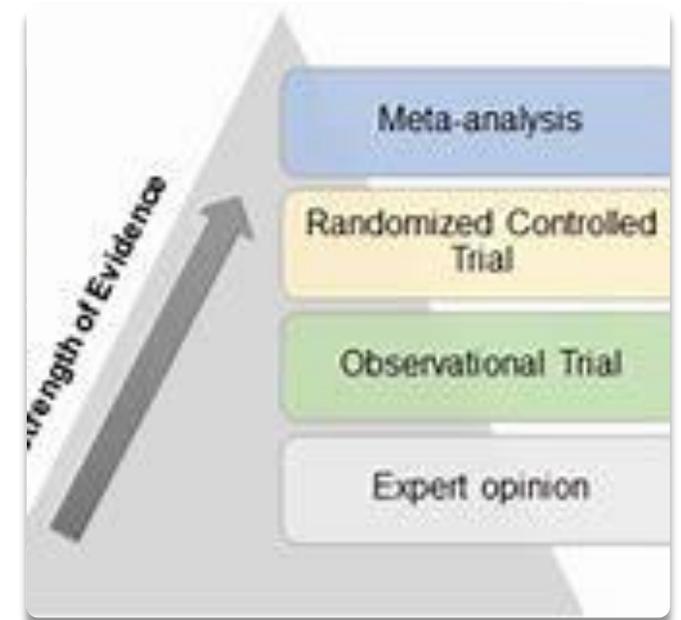
Design of research studies

Sackett's rules

Problems

- ▶ **Publication bias:** research studies often selectively included
- ▶ Higher ranking studies **may not be clinically relevant** or applicable
- ▶ Quantitative study may not answer a study question that a **qualitative study** would answer.

Frieden T, Evidence for health decision making – Beyond RCT's. New Eng. J Med 2017 377: 465-475)

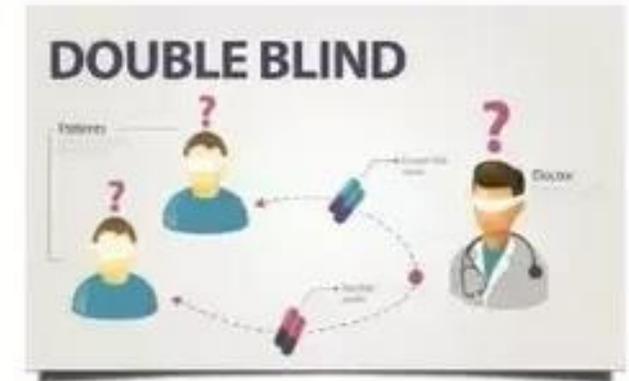
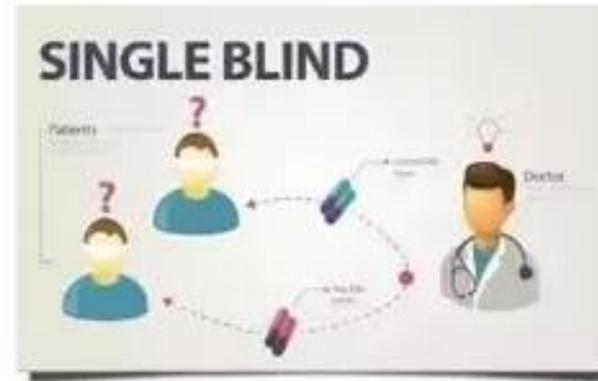


MLD in Research

- ▶ **Some of study methods preclude using MLD.**
- ▶ Single blind: hard to do a randomised control study with a **placebo** MLD used in the control group.
- ▶ Double blind: both patients and trialists should remain unaware of which treatment was given until the study is completed

Single-blind and double-blind study

- ❑ **Single blind study:** Patients don't know whether they are taking treatment or placebo (control dosage forms).
- ❑ **Double blind studies:** Both, patient and doctor, are in dark.



MLD in Research

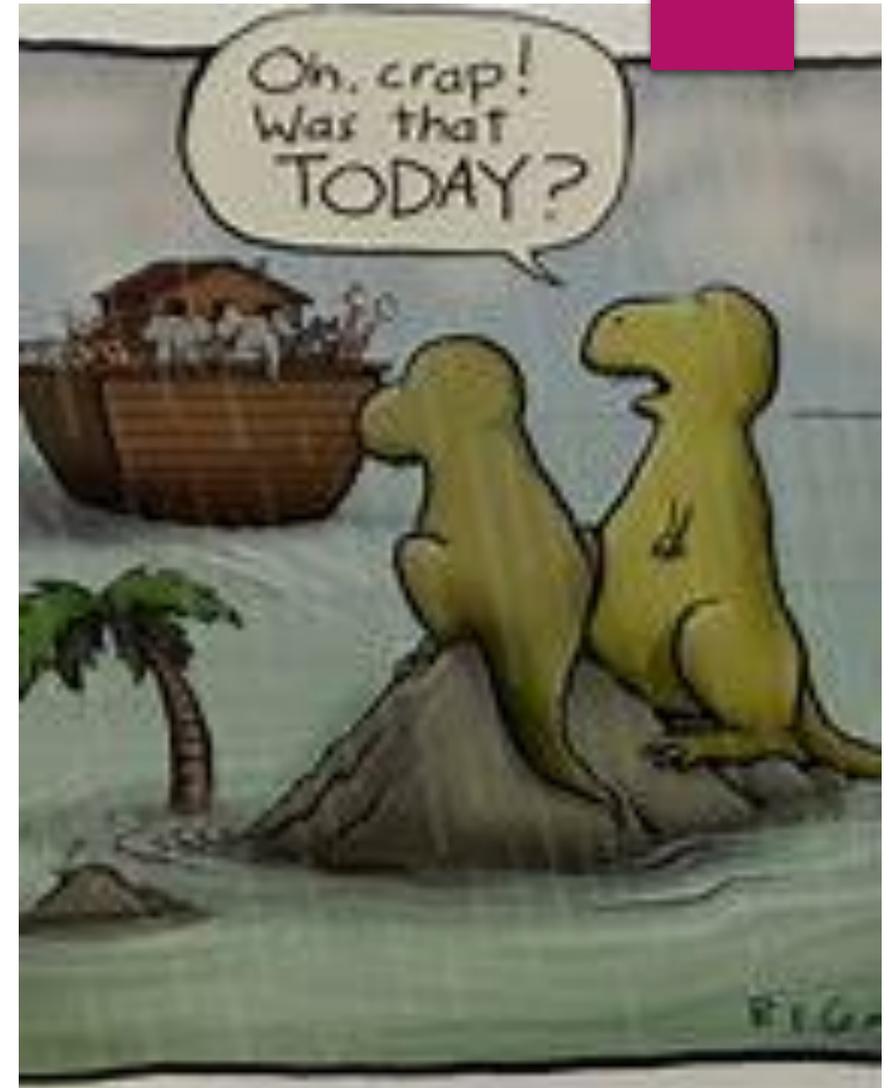
- ▶ Should evidence in research guide our clinical practice when the results are conflicting, hard to interpret and may be biased?

MLD in Research

- ▶ Manual lymphatic drainage for lymphedema following breast cancer treatment (Review)
The Cochrane Library 2015, Issue 5
- ▶ **Conclusion:**
 1. MLD is safe and well tolerated.
 2. Individuals with mild-to moderate BCRL may be the ones who benefit from adding MLD to an intensive course of treatment with compression bandaging.
 3. No trial examined MLD alone.
- ▶ **Problems:** Which MLD was used in the studies?

MLD in Research

- ▶ Are we missing the boat by focussing on lymphedema?

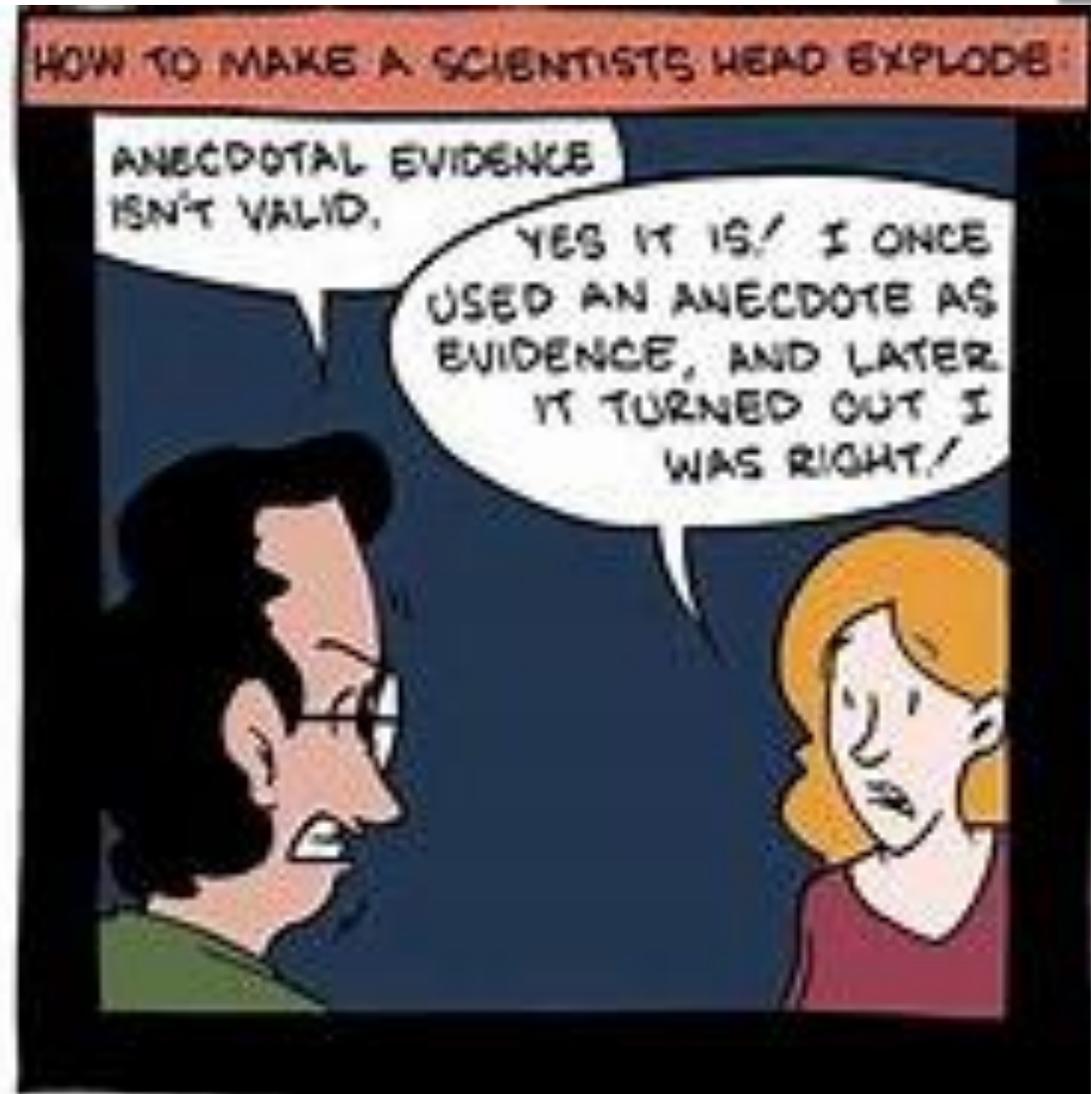


Dr. Vodder Review courses



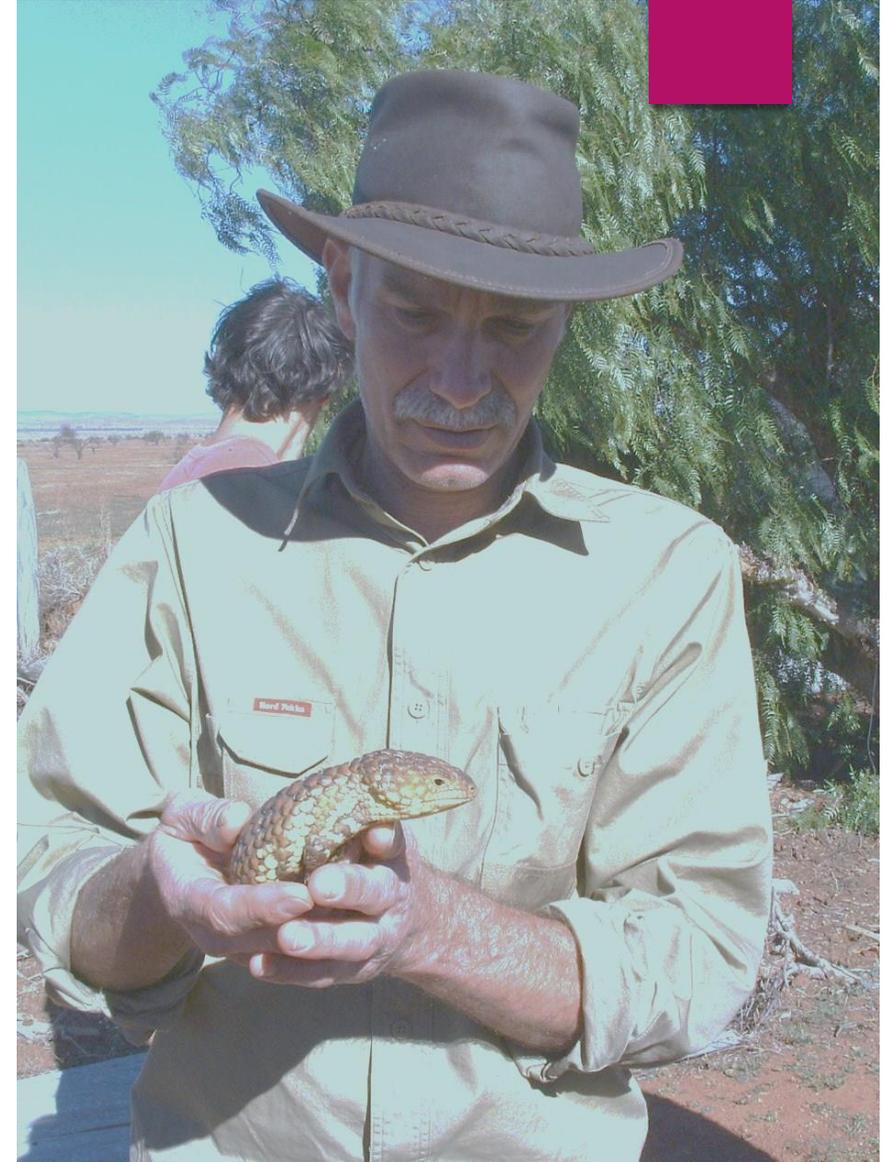
MLD in Research

- ▶ Case reports are valid!



Case reports

- ▶ **Professor Neil Piller:** “Case studies can be a very informative tool for learning and for pointing strongly to the fact that each patient is individual and in some respects, we have often lost the patient”



What makes a good case report?

- ▶ **Abstract**
- ▶ **Affiliation**
- ▶ **Introduction**
- ▶ **Method**
- ▶ **Results**
- ▶ **Discussion**
- ▶ **Conclusion**
- ▶ **Limitations**

Moving forward

- ▶ How do we take the great results we get in practice and put them into a research format?



Dr. Vodder Academy Research group

- ▶ **Purpose of DVAR:** to support and encourage therapists to publish and present their work with Dr. Vodder's MLD
- ▶ Jan Douglass, RMT, PhD
- ▶ Margit Eidinberger, Mag (PhD candidate)
- ▶ Marie-Eve Letellier, Kin, PhD
- ▶ Robert Harris, RMT, HND

Thank you for
your attention

