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FROM THE EDITOR

What is your view of randomised controlled trials (RCTs)? Do they produce meaningful findings when it comes to measuring the efficacy of psychological therapies? Or are they at best impersonal and at worst an exercise in manipulating statistics to produce findings supporting the bias of those with vested interests?

The latter was the view of several counsellors before they took part in the *Randomised Controlled Trial of Acupuncture, Counselling and Usual Care for Depression (ACUDep)*. The study, carried out at the University of York, was designed to compare the clinical and cost-effectiveness of acupuncture, counselling and usual care for moderate to severe depression, and is the subject of our lead article this issue.

As part of the trial, Sara Perren, Stewart Richmond and Hugh MacPherson took the opportunity to look at the experiences of counsellors participating in it, hearing about what they learnt and ascertaining whether their perspectives on RCTs (both methods and results) were changed by their participation. You can read the results on page 8.

In his article, Neville Tomlinson also takes on the subject of research, asking whether the emphasis on the need for counsellors and psychotherapists to provide evidence means the therapeutic relationship is getting lost. In a challenge to the superiority of the RCT as a way of measuring psychological therapies, Neville reminds us that the research we are considering is gleaned from the life stories of our fellow human beings, and that ultimately, only one person – the client – can determine their personal healing process and its success and sustainability.

