

# Strengths and limitations of meta-analyses

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**This commentary refers to ‘Meta-analyses of moving targets’, by C. Berry, <https://doi.org/10.1093/eurheartj/ehab359> and the discussion piece ‘Reporting data from meta-analysis: snapshot of a moving target’, by Y. Ahmad et al., <https://doi.org/10.1093/eurheartj/ehab681>.**

I thank Drs Ahmad, Howard, Madhavan, Bangalore, and Stone<sup>1</sup> for their response to my editorial.<sup>2</sup>

Their points are very well made. Taken together, we have shared motivation to provide the community with insights into the strengths and limitations of meta-analysis.

The results of meta-analysis are a function of multiple factors, not least the available data at any moment in time. When considering the impact of a meta-analysis, plurality is also relevant. Multiple meta-analyses by different research groups may be published on a given topic, and their findings may not be coherent. These issues are less relevant to individual-patient data pooled analyses, and we agree on the value of this approach. A critical review of evidence from meta-analyses is all the more

important given their prioritization to inform clinical practice guidelines.

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## References

1. Ahmad Y, Howard JP, Madhavan MV, Bangalore S, Stone GW. Reporting data from meta-analysis: snapshot of a moving target. *Eur Heart J* 2022;**43**:699–700.
2. Berry C. Meta-analyses of moving targets. *Eur Heart J* 2021;**42**:2655–2656

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