HOW STRONG IS THE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE?

SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS AND META-ANALYSES
gather & summarise all relevant studies on a particular topic - lower chance of bias

RANDOMISED CONTROLLED TRIALS (RCT)
identify population to study e.g. women over 50
split into two random groups and measure effects
one group is not exposed (control)
one group is exposed to treatment (intervention)

OBSERVATIONAL RESEARCH
scientists use these studies to identify correlations and develop hypotheses for further testing

ANIMAL & CELL STUDIES
effects in humans and animals are not always the same
isolated cells in the laboratory behave differently than cells in the body

EXPERT OPINIONS & ANECDOTES
a single person's experience or opinion does not provide an objective picture

COMMUNICATION TIPS
this is the strongest available evidence
these studies can prove causation but keep in mind not to generalise too readily
don't forget that correlation does not mean causation, and remember to communicate absolute risk
always keep in mind the limitations of cell and animal research
this evidence is too weak to draw conclusions

www.eufic.org