

The Dodo verdict

24 · *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

- ▶ Luborsky...
- ▶ *Everybody has won and all must have prizes*
- ▶ Are we in an Alice In Wonderland world?



Visual summary

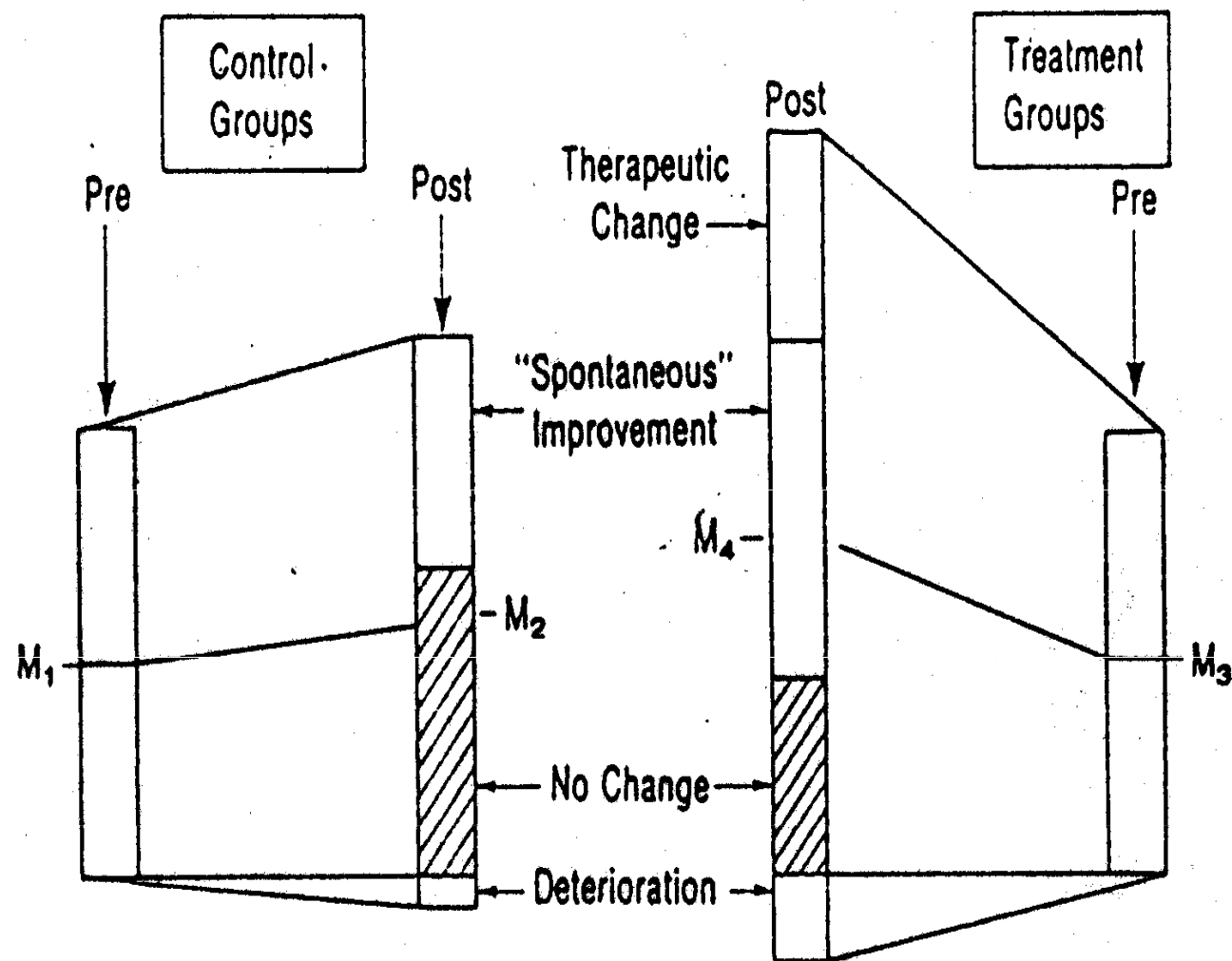


Figure 1. Changes in pathology for control and treatment groups (Gurman & Razin, 1977).

Who wants what kind of answer?

- ▶ Academic tradition from Eysenck 1952 – efficacy, traditional positivist approach
- ▶ Health Service – demand out of control (?) so need market discipline / rationing
- ▶ Therefore cost-benefit, clinical utility, effectiveness ratings needed
- ▶ Consumers / customers / patients, so satisfaction surveys? (eg. Seligman 1995)
- ▶ Alternative methodologies? Social constructionist account?

NIMH depression study

- ▶ TDCRP (Elkin 1994, Elkin et al 1989, and subsequent output) randomised control trial
- ▶ 3 sites, 250 clients randomly assigned
- ▶ 4 conditions: CBT, IPT, IMIpramine, PLA.
- ▶ Manualised with quality control
- ▶ IMI did best, 2 therapies close behind.
- ▶ Reinforces equivalence paradox

Research in therapy outcome

- ▶ General points:
 - ▶ All research is a compromise between competing priorities – eg. rigour versus meaning
 - ▶ No study is definitive
 - ▶ Replicability essential – substantive findings are well replicated
 - ▶ Research has stated and un-stated bias

The outcome equivalence paradox

- ▶ Models of therapy differ in *content*
 - ▶and in *mechanisms of change*
 - ▶and in the *Behaviour* of therapists
 - ▶ (shown to differ in practice)
- ▶ So diverse theories are diverse in practice and could be expected to produce diverse outcomes
- ▶ But, paradoxically, outcomes are broadly equivalent

Resolving the equivalence paradox 1: The dodo verdict is wrong

- ▶ Matrix paradigm: 10 x client / therapist / technique / setting = 10,000 cells
- ▶ But NIMH – 12 cells at huge cost
- ▶ Manualising & dismantling as research strategies
- ▶ Specific improvements not noticed in the noise of many variables

Resolving the equivalence paradox 2: The dodo verdict is still wrong

- ▶ Sensitivity of review (meta analysis)
- ▶ But Mackay, Barkham, Rees & Stiles (2003) found most reviews (n=255) poor on some or all of reporting
 - ▶ How studies searched for & located
 - ▶ Exclusion / inclusion criteria
 - ▶ Providing reliable unbiased assessments of studies reviewed

Resolving the equivalence paradox 3: The dodo verdict is right

- ▶ Outcomes equivalent because common factors are the change agents
- ▶ Broadly 2 groups
 - ▶ Warm involvement
 - ▶ Communication of new perspective
 - ▶ Frank (1973) all social influence
 - ▶ Frank & Frank (1991) re-moralisation
 - ▶ Rogerian core factors
 - ▶ Therapeutic alliance

Therapeutic alliance

- ▶ Bordin (1979)
- ▶ *Bonds* – emotional bond between client & therapist
- ▶ *Goals* – agreement on goals of treatment
- ▶ *Tasks* – quality of client & therapist involvement in tasks of therapy
- ▶ Just conceptual umbrella for several client & therapist variables?
- ▶ Circularity problem: Success → improved alliance → more success. Which is the causal factor?

Implications of equivalence paradox

- ▶ End of canonical status of schools? eclecticism, integration, anything goes?
- ▶ Continue with Paul's project? – DH evidence based clinical practice guideline
- ▶ Little firm evidence for common factors (Stiles et al 1986)
- ▶ Little evidence for specific ingredients either argue Ahn and Wampold (2001)
- ▶ Common versus specific factors a current, live debate.