Preamble
The paper, Clinical trial methodology by Richard Peto is available online at the James Lind Library (www.jameslindlibrary.org/peto-r-1978). The Overview summarises some of the papers that were presented at the meeting but were not included in this volume.

Aims
The purpose of this meeting was to discuss various approaches to the comparative therapeutic trials, highlight problems, controversies and opportunities and initiate a dialogue between the various disciplines involved in this particular technique. The meeting was a success with many talks and vigorous discussion (Overview, page 6).

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Editorial
Towards ecumenism for comparative trials (G Mathé)
Overview
An overview of the 1978 International meeting on Comparative Therapeutic Trials (SK Carter, G Mathé)
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Comparative clinical trials with historical controls: a statistician’s view (A Gehan)
Evaluation of prognosis and determination of therapy using multivariate methods (JP Nakache, P Lorente, C Chastang)
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Practical and conceptual limitations of best conceived randomised trials (L Israel)
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The two-armed-bandit problem: a decision theory approach in clinical trials (C Hill, H Sancho-Garnier)
The logistics of clinical trials (G Bonadonna, P Valagussa)
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How to evaluate improvements in cancer treatments: the debate continues (FE Jones)
Therapeutic trials and the applicable principles of law (P Arpaillange, JL Gaston)
Clinical trials as a religion (AA Rimm, M Bortin)

Authors
The organisers of the meeting are JL Lortat-Jacob, G Mathé (Villejuif, France) and J Servier. The Editorial was written by G Mathé, and the overview by SK Carter (Palo Alto) and G Mathé; the other authors are P Armitage (Oxford, UK); P Arpaillange (Paris, France); G Bonadonna (Milan, Italy); M Bortin (Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA); C Chastang (Paris, France); JL Gaston (Paris, France); A Gehan (Houston, Texas, USA); C Hill (Villejuif, France); L Israel (Bobigny, Paris, France); FE Jones (Tucson, Arizona, USA); P Lorente (Paris, France); D Machin (Brussels, Belgium); JP Nakache (Paris, France); R Peto (Oxford, UK); R Powles (London, UK); AA Rimm (Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA); H Sancho-Garnier (Villejuif, France); J Staquet (Brussels, Belgium); J Sylvester (Brussels, Belgium); P Valagussa (Milan, Italy).