

## 4.1 Forms of high evidence that inform clinical decision-making

Evidence is typically encountered in decision-making in eight different forms. These forms can be interrelated. For example, an evaluation featuring a randomized-controlled trial may also incorporate evidence that draws on data analytics, qualitative insights, and a cost-effectiveness analysis. Similarly, a case study may draw on both qualitative insights about experiences and preferences and quantitative evidence from data analytics, modeling and evaluations.

*\*We have grouped technology assessment and cost-effectiveness analysis because they are often conducted for the same types of products and services and by the same evidence groups, and because a cost-effectiveness analysis is almost always a key element of a technology assessment. We recognize that the producers of some of these forms of evidence place more emphasis on the process than the resulting evidence product, but these forms of evidence can still be encountered by many decision-makers who have not been involved in any related process.*

The ‘studies’ referred to in this chapter’s title (e.g., an evaluation, a behavioral-research study, a qualitative study, and other forms of ‘primary’ research) can generate many of these forms of evidence. The ‘syntheses’ from the chapter’s title are a form of evidence in their own right and are sometimes called ‘secondary’ research. The guidelines from the chapter’s title are also a form of evidence, and as we discuss in [section 4.4](#), technology assessments can also include recommendations.

We use the term ‘evidence’ as a shorthand for ‘research evidence,’ recognizing that there are many other types of evidence (e.g., evidence that individuals themselves derive from their own lived experiences and evidence considered in a context of law) and that evidence is one of many factors that can influence a decision. We define each of these terms in [section 4.2](#) and show how each form of evidence relates to steps in a decision-making process. We describe the reverse – how each step in a decision-making process relates to forms of evidence – in [section 4.3](#).