David Batty, UK: Using existing cohorts to answer new questions

There has been recent major financial investment by UK research agencies in the use of routinely collected records, and considerable excitement in the scientific community as a result. While routinely collected data have, in the short time they have been available, yielded findings of major public health implications, data from investigator-led (‘bespoke’) cohort studies continue to have considerable utility and distinct advantages that should not be overlooked. This is the case for both single study analyses (‘discovery’ science) and multi-study analyses (‘last word’ science). In this presentation I will discuss the value of routinely collected and linked data, occasions when they may lead to incorrect conclusions, and also offer some examples of individual participant meta-analysis of existing cohort studies in the context of risk factors for both somatic disease and neurological disorders, including dementia.