What strategies/interventions have been described in literature aiming to prepare students for uncertainty?

24/04/17 EAPH Conference - Baptiste Motte (France)

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MEDICAL UNCERTAINTY

- **Usual causes:**
  - Limits in current knowledge
  - Practitioner’s own limits, knowledge and experience
  - Personnal significance of a particular risk
  - Ignorance of a relevant information

- **A specific cause for general practice:**
  - Patients present undefined and unorganized problems at early stage

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Intolerance to uncertainty or mismanaging it can cause:

- Reduced quality and increased cost of care
- Low quality of shared decision making
- Impact on physician’s practice (anxiety, burn-out risk factor, career choice, attitude toward the underserved)

What strategies/interventions have been described in literature aiming to prepare students for uncertainty?
METHOD

- Unsystematic review of literature
- In PUBMED and GOOGLE SCHOLAR
- On various issues, published between 1972 and January 2016, related to uncertainty in medical education:
  - Definition and causes of uncertainty
  - Communication of uncertainty
  - Tolerance of uncertainty
  - Managing uncertainty
  - Evaluating uncertainty
  - Recommendations and effective teaching of uncertainty

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RESULTS

95 papers retained:

- Ways to manage uncertainty: 48 papers
- Definitions and causes of uncertainty: 26 papers
- Tolerance of uncertainty: 26 papers
- Communication of uncertainty: 25 papers
- Evaluation of uncertainty: 10 papers
- Results of training/educative interventions among medical students: 3 papers

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RESULTS OF TRAINING/EDUCATIVE INTERVENTIONS AMONG MEDICAL STUDENTS: 3 papers


DISCUSSION

- Uncertainty: a term too broad... and too specific
CONCLUSION
KEY MESSAGES

- There are few strategies/interventions described in literature aiming to prepare students for uncertainty
- We need evidences on this pedagogic issue because of
  - Consequences of mismanaging it or intolerance to it
  - Shared decision making is a growing movement. Physicians will have to communicate more their uncertainty than they do.
- A rigorous and evaluated intervention to prepare students to uncertainty would demand a clear choice of the kind of uncertainty apprehended and an adequate pedagogical strategy.

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Thank you for your attention!