

UC San Diego

Family Medicine Research Symposium 2026

Title

Curing the Doubt: A Novel Family Medicine Resident-Faculty Workshop to Address Medical Uncertainty in the Clinical Learning Environment

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5q7710d3>

Authors

Lynch, Allison
Johnson, Michelle
Wilkinson, Lesley
[et al.](#)

Publication Date

2026-08-12

Peer reviewed

Background

Healthcare providers often face medical uncertainty related to unclear diagnoses and prognoses. Uncertainty can cause discomfort for providers, learners, and patients and negatively impact the clinical learning environment. Internal surveys of UCSD Family Medicine (FM) residents identified clinical reasoning and navigating uncertainty as areas needing support.

Objective

The UCSD FM Department designed and implemented a cross-institutional workshop introducing a structured framework (RAPS – Recognize, Empower, Acknowledge, and Seek Support) to help family medicine faculty and residents navigate clinical uncertainty.

Data & Methods

Evaluation used a pre-post survey including the Intolerance of Uncertainty Short Scale (IUS-12), four clinical practice uncertainty domains (CPUD) questions, Likert scales, and free responses.

Results

While overall intolerance of uncertainty scores did not change, comfort improved in two CPUDs: 1) I feel prepared to address uncertain situations during clinical practice (3.8→4.34/5, $p=0.01$) and 2) When I encounter clinically uncertain situations, my well-being is negatively affected (3.2→2.5/5, $p<0.01$).

Conclusions & Implications

The workshop fostered shared language, engagement, and highlighted uncertainty as a teachable clinical skill. It demonstrated feasible cross-institutional hybrid collaboration. We plan to launch a modified version of the workshop with medical students in the FM curriculum.