

W16

How do we think? Let's give a thought to our medical decision making!

Hagit Dascal-Weichhendler(1,2), Shelly Rothschild(1,2)

(1) Department of Family Medicine, Clalit Health Services, Haifa, Israel

(2) Department of Family Medicine, Rappaport School of Medicine, Technion, Haifa, Israel

Corresponding author: Dr Hagit Dascal-Weichhendler, Clalit Health Services, and Rappaport School of Medicine, Department of Family Medicine, Ramat-Yshai, Israel. E-mail: hagitdw@yahoo.com

Background and Aim: As family physicians, we make diagnostic and treatment decisions successively during the day. Our decisions influence our patients' lives, some critically. Despite this significant role, most of us have had no formal training in decision making, a relatively new topic, which now is taught in many medical schools. Honestly, in daily practice, do we stop and think about these decisions as often as we should? The aim of this workshop is to stop, think, reflect and explore our decision making process. Specifically, we will discuss and offer examples of some common "cognitive errors" and address strategies and tools that could be helpful in minimizing them.

Methods: We will start the workshop with an introductory review of current knowledge on processes that influence medical decision making, such as biases /cognitive errors. Strategies that could minimize these errors will be presented. This will be followed by small group discussions of clinical cases brought forth by participants, as well as clinical vignettes. Sharing of knowledge, experience and specific tools will be encouraged, as well as role playing. Groups will report to the rest of the workshop participants their experience and conclusions.

Results: Participants will gain increased awareness and knowledge regarding different factors that influence our thought processes and clinical decision making. They will learn to define and provide examples of some common cognitive errors. Finally, they will learn some strategies intended at minimizing some of these errors in daily practice.

Conclusions: Despite the inherent stress and workload in daily practice, physicians need to be aware of factors that may adversely affect their clinical decisions. For the safety and wellbeing of their patients, as well as for themselves, physicians must take control and reflect regularly on their decisions. Physicians should be aware of common cognitive errors and seek to minimize them.