

# Comfort with uncertainty in medical professionals

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## **Comfort with uncertainty in medical professionals**

### **An exploration of how clinicians experience and manage dynamic problems in practice**

Jonathan S. Ilgen  
December 15, 2021

1. To act with confidence while simultaneously remaining uncertain is a paradox that epitomizes expert clinical practice. (this dissertation, Chapter 2)
2. Holistic appraisals of comfort exist on a dynamic spectrum, informed by cues that clinicians gather from themselves, their patients, and the environment. (this dissertation, Chapter 7)
3. Managing uncertainty in the moment encompasses more than just activities to reduce what is not known. (this dissertation, Chapter 7)
4. A holistic sense of *sufficient comfort* enables practicing clinicians to carry forward, while *sufficient discomfort* triggers greater attention and intention. (this dissertation, Chapter 7)
5. Novice clinicians are inherently skeptical of their appraisals of comfort, leading to distortions in how they approach uncertainty. (this dissertation, Chapter 7)
6. When managing uncertainty, trainees described a clear desire for supported independence such that they could safely struggle through problems and maintain ownership of a situation with the reassurance that help was available and accessible. (this dissertation, Chapter 6)
7. Managing uncertainty is a shared endeavor that is best fostered within teams that value expressing vulnerability, asking others for help, and collaborative work. (this dissertation, Scientific Impact)
8. Faith in the stability and predictability of the world-within-reach provides a sense of 'I can do it again' which the practitioner relies on to get through the day's work. (based on Paul Atkinson, *Training for Certainty, Social Science & Medicine*, 1984)
9. Jumping to the conclusions is sometimes the right thing to do even before all of the dots have been collected. (Gary Klein, "Streetlights and Shadows," 2011)
10. It is difficult to make predictions, especially about the future (unattributed, recorded by Karl Kristian Steincke as spoken in Danish parliament during the year 1937-1938).