

Parallel Short Course 10

TRUSTWORTHINESS OF CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES

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Description:

The principles of evidence-based medicine (EBM) and medical decision making call for physicians to make decisions based on the best available evidence from clinical research that maximize individual patients' benefits and minimize their harms, according to the patients' values. Evidence-based Clinical practice guidelines (CPGs) have been promoted for over 20 years as methods to improve quality of care, and lower costs. Yet physicians often fail to follow such guidelines.

Traditionally, postulated reasons for lack of compliance were physicians' lack of knowledge of the evidence, or of understanding of or agreement with the principles of evidence based medicine (EBM) that supposedly underlie most guidelines. Yet interventions based to improve knowledge, or such understanding or agreement have generally failed to improve CPG adherence, suggesting consideration of other reasons for non-adherence. Instead, recent evidence suggests that physicians may fail to trust CPGs. Some prominent reasons for lack of trust may be concerns about the integrity of the evidence base supporting the guidelines, and concerns about the guideline development process.

This course will:

- provide background on the use of evidence- based CPGs and how they have not yet fulfilled their promise.
- discuss a case study of CPGs for the management of depression in primary care, suggesting that concerns about the integrity of the clinical evidence underlying these guidelines may have lead to lack of adherence to them.
- discuss challenges to the integrity of the clinical evidence base, focusing on suppression and manipulation of clinical research to serve vested interests, particularly those of commercial sponsors of research meant to assess these sponsors' own products or services.

This will include

- reviewing various mechanisms of research suppression.
- describing how all components of clinical research, including study design, implementation, analysis, and dissemination, may be manipulated to produce results desired by research sponsors.
- provide a discussion of measures that might improve the trustworthiness of the CPG development process, with emphasis on the recent report by the US Institute of Medicine, of which Dr Smith was an author.