Defining Clinical Reasoning

• You can’t measure what you can’t define
• No shortage of definitions of clinical reasoning
• Too complex to measure all parts of it, so need to focus on one aspect
The Two Faces of Clinical Reasoning

Diagnosis

Therapy
Diagnostic Reasoning

• Categorization task
• Given this information, what is the best diagnosis
• “Correct” answer
• Time-delimited
• Lends itself to self-contained cases or stimuli
Therapeutic Reasoning

• Decision analytic approaches
  • Weighting probabilities, outcomes, utilities, benefits
  • Normative models

• Little ‘descriptive’ work on how physicians make therapeutic decisions

• Complexity
  • Time, changes in patient response, new information, context, team/social influences, defining the goal, communication
  • Probably is no single cognitive process for therapeutic reasoning
Some Assessment Tools

• Multiple Choice and Extended Matching Questions
• Oral Examinations
• Key Features Tests
• Script Concordance Tests
Some Assessment Tools

• Expert Observations
• Chart Stimulated Recall and Audits
• Simulation (of all varieties)
• Experimental methods (think aloud, concept mapping, semantic differentials, etc.)