

Stereotypes and heuristics

Psychology



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Stereotypes and Heuristics Questions Heuristics based on stereotypes can confound diagnoses because they can easily be applied to an inappropriate group through overgeneralization, and they often contain information that is derived from personal beliefs framed by culture rather than scientific evidence. A doctor could attempt to identify the amount of impact that stereotype-based heuristics on their own practice by obtaining second opinions from other professionals, especially those who are likely to have been exposed to a different cultural background. In order to mitigate this issue, doctors should be more concerned with evidence-based diagnoses rather than heuristics (Hilbig & Pohl, 2009). Utilizing peer-reviewed research as provided from a variety of viewpoints greatly reduces the risk of stereotypes leading to an incorrect judgement.

2. Heuristics are a major component of the framework that supports human perception as they allow for the optimization of mental multitasking by reducing the amount of information that needs to be processed.

Unfortunately, this system can easily result in the formation and application of biases in our decisions when heuristics are based on perceived personal knowledge rather than observational evidence (Hilbig, Erdfelder, & Pohl, 2010). Heuristics are unconscious operations that are not usually scrutinized by direct awareness and are thus able to remain a consistent part of our decisions even when they are operating on error-prone stereotypes. The most basic and impactful way in which we can mitigate the negative impact of heuristic biases is to be consciously aware of the information that is being used to support our decisions. This is necessary because without direct awareness heuristics of all types will be regularly employed as long as the information remains the same, which is probable due to the relatively

consistent long-term nature of attitudes that have formed from the same culturally-framed perspectives.

References

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