

## Heuristics

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Heuristics: Heuristic reasoning is the process of arriving at judgments and decisions in a sort of gut instinct/common sense fashion. Relying on common sense saves a lot of time when making decisions, but it can be problematic if important information has not been factored into the decision making process and bias leads to errors.

For example, assuming that someone has been bitten by a snake and treating that person for snakebite is all very well if that person has indeed been bitten by a snake that is indeed poisonous. But if the person has not, the consequences for patient and doctor can be less than desirable.

Thus, healthcare providers periodically examine how they are making decisions.

And public health policymakers and health educators have to think about how they craft public education on preventive health matters (e.g., safer sex practices, breast cancer screenings) by keeping in mind how various patient groups process information and act on it. Human beings, alas, tend to be somewhat irrational and unpredictable creatures who don't always act in their own best interests.

It has generally been found  
That all judgments that are sound  
Are based in part on common sense,  
But always backed by evidence.