

Title

Rapid Clinical Decision in Context: A theoretical framework to understand physician decision-making

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Description

The purpose of this paper is to draw on previous work in multiple disciplines to establish a theoretical framework for clinical decision-making that incorporates non-medical factors, such as race, into the way physicians may make decisions in the real world practice of medicine. The proposed Rapid Clinical Decision in Context (RCDC) model attempts to understand the influence of various contextual elements on physicians' decision-making process. A thorough review of the available literature provides ample support for the RCDC model.

In brief, physicians' use of multiple fallible indicators leads to errors in judgment. The use of a recognition-primed decision-making strategy means that physicians are likely to rely on their initial impression of the patient. When physicians and patients interact, the interaction often fails to alter physicians' initial impressions because of communication difficulties arising from social differences between physicians and patients, such as cultural capital and habitus.

Understanding real-world physician decision-making has broad healthcare implications from addressing racial/ethnic disparities in treatment to medical education.