



## Availability bias: recalling particular examples In judging the frequency of events

In judging frequency of events people sometimes use the ease with which they can recall particular examples (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). The availability heuristic is of great importance in assessing risk given that the events that are recent or more covered in the media, for example, murder, accidents, and tornadoes, will be perceived as riskier (Lichtenstein, Slovic, Fischhoff, Layman, & Combs, 1978). On the other hand, risks for which it is harder to recall concrete examples given that they are, for example, less “dramatic”, are underestimated (Lichtenstein et al., 1978). A follow-up study by Combs and Slovic (1979) showed that people's errors in judging probability was strongly associated with selective reporting in newspapers.

Note: See source document for full reference.

### Applicable to:

Stakeholders: [Individual/collective memory](#), [Worldviews](#)

Disaster Phases: [Prevention](#), [Preparedness](#)

Types of Actors Concerned: [Media](#), [Non-active citizens](#)

Hazards: [Natural hazards](#), [Man-made non-intentional hazards or emergency situations](#), [Man-made intentional hazards](#)

### Recommendations:

- [Develop risk assessments methodologies, which consider cultural factors, the manner in which people cognitively process information and which employ a gender perspective](#)

## Source

[Deliverable D4.1 "Mapping risk perception concepts in the context of disasters" \(page 48\)](#)

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