

The Role of Chance in Psychology

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Tendency to try to explain chance events

- Our brains have evolved in such a way that they engage in a relentless search for patterns in the world.
- Monkey example

- Illusory correlation: tendency to explain chance. People tend to see their expected correlation even in random events.
- Illusion of control: personal skill can affect outcomes determined by chance.

Accepting Error in order to reduce error: Clinical versus Actuarial prediction

- Actuarial prediction is one that predicts the same outcome for all individuals sharing a certain characteristic.
- Clinical prediction is when a practitioner can make an accurate prediction on the outcome of different individuals.

Conclusion

- We can't rely on clinical judgment
- Decades of research has proven that actuarial prediction is superior to clinical prediction.
- However, statistical prediction also correctly signals that there will always be errors and uncertainties when predicting human behavior.