

Pre-Admonition Suggestion in Show-Ups

Katherine M. Luecht, Zachary E. Watson, Psychology



Perpetrator



Innocent Suspect

Overview

- 72% of cases overturned by DNA evidence involved an eyewitness factor (InnocenceProject.org)
- Pre-admonition suggestions are made by an administrator to witness before the identification procedure begins
- “Relax, I’m sure you’ll be able to get the guy.”
- Previous research has shown pre-ad to increase false id’s and inflate confidence
- Never been assessed in show-up procedures
- Show-ups are not recommended but frequently used

Impact

- Pre-ad mitigates the protective effects of unbiased instructions in show-ups
- Any suggestions made to a witness about their performance can influence their choosing and confidence
- These suggestions could be casual and unintentional, yet pervasive

Key Findings

- Participants who got pre-ad were 3.97 times more likely to make a false id
- Participants who got pre-ad were 2.57 times more likely to choose in target present conditions
- Participants in the unbiased pre-admonition condition significantly more likely to make a false id, $\chi^2(1, N = 59) = 3.98, p = .045$, Cramer’s $V = .260$
- Participants who got pre-ad were overall more confident in their decision

Explanation

- Recommendations supported that show-ups are highly suggestive and should not be used
- Support for effect of pre-admonition suggestion in other id procedures
- Warnings/policy changes to reduce probability that an administrator will give a pre-admonition suggestion
- Need for awareness about social influence in pre-identification interactions

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