

Showups Versus Lineups with Older Adults

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Overview

- 72% of cases overturned by DNA evidence involved an eyewitness misID (InnocenceProject.org)
- Showups (one person ID) frequently used (30-77% of real cases)
- Accuracy lower than in lineups (multiple person ID)
- Eyewitnesses often older (age 60+)
- Previous research shows that older adults misID more often than young adults
- Could be particularly true for showups
- Reliance on gist memory, feelings of familiarity, decrease in FFA
- No study has compared showups and lineups for younger and older adults

Key Findings

- Lineups had higher accuracy than showups
- Even if a lineup is biased (only one viable option)
- Showup witnesses severely overestimate accuracy, lineup witnesses slightly underestimate accuracy
- No age differences in accuracy or confidence judgments

Impact

- Showup witnesses are often inaccurate but very confident
- Confident witnesses more likely to testify
- Recommend that law enforcement stop using showups entirely
- Future research should attempt to identify a better field ID procedure

Explanation

- Lineups better, may be because witnesses can compare facial features
- No age differences because past research has analyzed all ID's, this study focused on suspect ID's
- More social pressure to choose from showup, and lack of options inflates confidence

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