

CSI effect: Expectation of forensic evidence and its effects on juror's verdicts

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Many attorneys, judges, and journalists have claimed that watching television programs like CSI has caused jurors to wrongfully acquit guilty defendants when certain scientific evidence is not presented (e.g., DNA, Fingerprints, and Surveillance video). The present research focuses on the association between the amount of exposure to CSI-like television dramas and mock-jurors' ratings of both the accuracy and persuasiveness of different types of forensic evidence. The research will also explore the relationship between guilt ratings (combination of verdict and confidence) and the amount of exposure to CSI-like programs, ratings of forensic evidence accuracy and persuasiveness. During the online portion of this study, mock-juror participants completed a questionnaire assessing their exposure to CSI-like dramas and their beliefs regarding the accuracy and persuasiveness of different types of forensic evidence. Approximately one week after completing the questionnaire participants viewed a murder trial of a man accused of killing his wife and made verdict decisions and indicated confidence in these decisions. Data analyses are expected to show that high levels of exposure to CSI-like dramas are significantly associated juror's emphasis on the requirement for certain forensic evidence. Although, contraire to belief, this increased desire for forensic evidence by CSI viewers is not expected to be associated with their actual verdict decisions when compared to non-CSI viewers.

Biography

Ashley J. Porter is currently a student at the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee. She is working on Bachelor of Arts degrees in Criminology and Psychology. Ashley Porter is currently the Psychology Club President and an active member of Bulls Mentoring Bulls. Along with her involvement in student organizations, Ashley works as a research assistant to Dr. Ruva on the topic of pretrial publicity and has just recently started to work with Dr. Reich on the topic of alcohol and substance use.

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