

Anxiety, suggestibility and forgetting

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Superficial reading of the literature on anxiety and suggestibility appears to indicate that there is no consistency in findings. However, on closer inspection, it becomes evident that suggestibility caused by leading questions, and as measured by the Gudjonsson Suggestibility Scales, is positively related to anxiety, while studies which have looked at the impact of post-event questions on *subsequent* recall of details for an event have shown a negative relationship between anxiety (particularly 'state') and suggestibility in studies using both standard 'Loftus' type paradigms and source identification tasks. The latter methodology is elegant for a number of reasons, but of particular interest is that it enables the identification of not-recognised or *forgotten* misleading information, from which a suggestible response cannot follow. This presentation will present data from a pilot study, which shows participants who had their anxiety manipulated were (non-significantly) less suggestible than those who were not subject to the manipulation, and were also significantly more likely to *forget* misleading information. Further findings looking at the relationship between standardised measures of anxiety, suggestibility and forgetting show apparently contradictory findings. This paradox will be discussed in terms of theories of cognition and anxiety.