

Memory characteristics of eyewitness identification

Valentine, T.

Goldsmiths, University of London

Mistaken eyewitness identification occurs frequently. The challenge for the courts is to distinguish an accurate eyewitness identification of the perpetrator from a mistaken identification of an innocent suspect. Witness confidence can be of some help when averaged across groups, but at an individual level it is unreliable: confident eyewitness can be mistaken. A comparison is made between mistaken identification and false memory. Drawing on the source monitoring framework, a pilot study explored the utility of the witnesses' self-ratings of their memory characteristics to distinguish accurate from mistaken identifications.