



E62 The “CSI Effect”: Is It Relevant to You?

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The goal of this presentation is to inform attendees of the controversial issue of the “CSI Effect” and the different ways it can affect each person.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by informing attendees of how they are affected by the “CSI Effect” and what they can do to adapt to it.

The “CSI Effect” is a controversial issue in the fields of forensic science and criminal justice. It is commonly called the “CSI Syndrome.” The “CSI Effect” can be defined as “the influence of media, mainly television shows, on the people in juries, studies, and the general idea about how the field operates and its environment.”¹ The theory is said to affect everyone, even when they don’t know it. It is closely related to two possible theories. The first is the cultivation theory. This is defined as “the theory that the more television you watch, the more likely you are to believe that the world is exactly like it is in the media.”² The second is the “Perry Mason Syndrome.” This is based on the crime show *Perry Mason* and is said to be the first show that could have sparked the idea of altering perceptions of the United States legal system among defendants and jurors.³ These are also controversial issues and there is research that supports and contradicts the existence. This will open the eyes of many people to the obstacles they may face in the field and will give them the knowledge they need to overcome it.

The effect has become a major issue in the field and has been brought to attention due to the juries’ new knowledge in courtrooms. The research presented will be of a survey conducted to a handful of citizens who are jury eligible. The results are currently inconclusive, with more research to be conducted over the next few months. After extensive research, the “CSI Effect” may exist based on opinion but most researchers agree that the “Tech Effect” has more influence on the people and may be the primary cause of the theory due to the rapidly changing technology that we experience every day. The “CSI Effect” may exist with both positives and negatives coming from the theory. In the opinion that it does exist, the benefits outweigh the negatives.⁴ It becomes more beneficial to acknowledge the possibility of its existence and learn how to work with it. This presentation seeks to acknowledge the possibility of the “CSI Effect” and to help people of all interests learn and understand the ways it can affect them.

Reference(s):

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2. Alldredge, John. The “CSI Effect” and Its Potential Impact on Juror Decisions. *Themis: Research Journal of Justice Studies and Forensic Science*. No. 3, 1, 6 (July 3, 2015): 1-15. Accessed June 2017. <http://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/themis/vol3/iss1/6>.
3. “Perry Mason Syndrome.” *OMICS International*. Last modified 2014, http://research.omicsgroup.org/index.php/Perry_Mason_syndrome.
4. Lovgren, Stefan. “CSI Effect” Is Mixed Blessing for Real Crime Labs. *National Geographic News*. Last modified September 23, 2004. http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2004/09/0923_040923_csi.html.

“CSI Effect”, CSI Syndrome, Cultivation Theory