



## 125 The Influence of a Juror's Note-Taking on Other Jurors' Memories for Testimony

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**Learning Overview:** The goal of this presentation is to discuss how jurors who take notes during a trial may be able to heavily influence the opinions of jurors who did not take notes.

**Impact on the Forensic Science Community:** This presentation will impact the forensic science community by adding to the limited body of literature that exists on this topic and by bridging theories from the fields of forensic science, cognitive psychology, and social psychology.

This study seeks to investigate how a juror's memory for testimony may be influenced by a fellow juror who took notes during the trial. The non-note-taking juror may rely on the memory of the note-taking juror. If that is the case, could this juror's memories actually be altered? Research suggests that being exposed to misinformation after an event can alter a person's memory of that event, especially if it comes from a "reliable" source.<sup>1-3</sup> In addition to unconsciously altering memories, we sometimes choose to conform (i.e., change our opinions based on what others around us believe). When our decision is based on evidence provided by others, this is known as informational influence.<sup>4-5</sup> This influence may be of particular importance in jury deliberations.

Some research specific to jury settings does suggest that jurors may be influenced by opinions of other jurors who have taken notes.<sup>6-7</sup> However, these studies are relatively dated, and further research is needed to investigate whether a juror's actual memory of the testimony is influenced or just their judgement of the verdict.

This study will see how the opinions of a juror who takes notes during a trial influences the opinions of other jurors. Attendees will watch a video of a witness testifying at a mock trial. They will be sent to "deliberate." A confederate will have notes with inaccurate details about the testimony. Attendees will be tested again on their memories to see if the participant incorporates the other juror's inaccurate details. It is hypothesized that attendees' verdicts will be changed by the opinion expressed by the note-taking confederate, and that attendees' memories of the trial's details will be changed.

Jurors may believe that by choosing to trust the opinions of someone who has written details from the trial, they are more likely to have an unbiased, accurate memory of the trial. It is important that individuals know what outside sources may affect their memories and opinions, and this study will provide additional information in this field.

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### Psychology, Note-Taking, Jurors