**PDRA Research Project**

Obtaining best evidence from young eyewitnesses: investigating changes in practice following the vulnerable witness (Scotland) Bill

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**Summary:**

Under the provisions of the Vulnerable Witness Act (2004) Scotland, any child under the age of 16 years who witnesses crime where identification is an issue will be subject to a video parade. However, no research to date had investigated how well children and adolescents could identify a suspect from a video parade. The aim of the project was to investigate the use of video parades in Scotland using a two pronged approach. This has entailed carrying out experimental studies in schools examining children's, and adolescent's ability to identify a stranger from a video parade and also a survey of video parade operators in Scotland, recording the behaviour of witnesses making an identification.

**Key Findings:**

One of the findings from the experimental research is that children (aged 7-9 years) adolescents (aged 13-15 years) can correctly identify a culprit (target) from a parade when the target is present as accurately from a video parade, as compared to a static photographic parade. However, when a target is absent form a parade and the correct decision is to say 'the person is not there' then video parades can reduce false identifications as compared to photographic parades, but only for adolescent witnesses (Havard, Memon, Clifford & Gabbert, 2010).

The field study data had responses of 1718 real witnesses and victims who attempted to make identifications from video parades in Scotland in 2008. On average the suspect was identified 44 percent of the time, a figure comparable to the rate reported in other field studies conducted in the UK. Age was a factor that was found to influence identification from a parade. Child witnesses were also more likely than adults (over 26 years of age) to identify a suspect, whereas middle aged adults (41-60 years of age) were more likely to identify a suspect compared to older adults (over 61 years of age). The delay between witnessing an event and seeing a parade also influenced identification and witnesses who saw a video parade less than month after witnessing the event were more likely to identify the suspect that those who saw the parade over 2 months after witnessing an event (Memon, Havard, Clifford & Gabbert, 2010).

**Publications:**  
  
[**SIPR Research Summary No 1: Obtaining best evidence from young eyewitnesses: investigating changes in practice following the vulnerable witness (Scotland) Bill.**](https://web.archive.org/web/20130704130428/http:/www.sipr.ac.uk/downloads/Research_Summaries/Research_Summary_1.pdf) [May 2009]  
  
[**Delay and Age Effects on Identification Accuracy and Confidence: An Investigation Using a Video Identification Parade**](https://web.archive.org/web/20130704130428/http:/www.sipr.ac.uk/downloads/Clifford_2011.pdf) Clifford, Havard, Memon & Gabbert. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*  
  
[**A Comparison of Video and Static Photo Lineups with Child and Adolescent Witnesses**](https://web.archive.org/web/20130704130428/http:/www.sipr.ac.uk/downloads/Havard_2010.pdf)Havard, Memon, Clifford & Gabbert. *Applied Cognitive Psychology, 24, 1209-1221*  
  
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