

The cognitive interview: does it successfully avoid the dangers of forensic hypnosis?

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Seventy-two undergraduates viewed a videotape of a bank robbery that culminated in the shooting of a young boy. Several days later, participants were interviewed about their recollection of events in the film through baseline oral and written narrative accounts followed by random assignment to a hypnosis (HYP) condition, the cognitive interview (CI), or a motivated, repeated recall (MRR) control interview.

Participants also completed a forced interrogatory recall test, which indexed potential report criterion differences between the interview conditions. In terms of information provided for the first time during treatment interviews, HYP led to greater productivity than the CI or the MRR interview, which did not differ significantly from each other. Evidence that these differences in recall resulted primarily from report criterion differences rather than differences in accessible memory was obtained from the forced interrogatory recall test. In this test, no differences were observed between the three interview conditions. Finally, the data revealed that participants' hypnotic ability was associated with the recall of erroneous and confabulatory material for those tested in the HYP and CI conditions but not those in the MRR condition. This suggests that some CI mnemonics may invoke hypnotic-like processes in hypnotizable people.

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