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JUROR DECISIONS IN A CAPITAL TRIAL INVOLVING INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

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Participants (N = 283) were asked to act as mock jurors in the sentencing phase of a capital trial involving a defendant with a possible intellectual disability (ID). The Story Model Theory of decision making proposes that jurors filter and interpret evidence based on their own backgrounds, experiences, and biases, developing a narrative that best fits the information presented in court. Mock jurors were randomly assigned to one of six conditions varying the defendant's physical presentation (stereotypical and non-stereotypical) and the presented elements of the ID definition (intelligence quotient [IQ]; adaptive functioning and age of onset; and IQ, age of onset, and adaptive functioning). Mock jurors were asked to determine whether the defendant had an ID and whether he should serve life in prison or receive the death penalty. Even though Atkins v. Virginia prohibits the execution of individuals with an ID, it was hypothesized that jurors would be less likely to identify an ID if the defendant did not fit a stereotypical presentation. It was also hypothesized IQ would be the main piece of diagnostic information that jurors used to make decisions. A MANCOVA was conducted. None of the hypotheses were supported; however, jurors' attitudes about the death penalty and the defendant's physical presentation did affect juror decisions. These results highlight the need for a refined and more comprehensive voir dire process to detect bias surrounding ID in capital cases.

STRESS AND TRAUMA MANAGEMENT FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

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Higher than normal rates of suicide, alcoholism, domestic violence, and work related trauma are found in police officers. This article provides information for forensic psychologists working with police officers and/or their families, including the cultural dynamics associated with seeking mental health services, theoretical models of stress, and sound stress reduction techniques.

EXPRESSION OF SORROW OR APOLOGY

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Social etiquette calls for an expression of sorrow or an apology in the event of a mishap, but it may have adverse consequences in the event of litigation. It may be deemed an admission of fault, which circumvents the requirement of expert testimony in a malpractice lawsuit. Legislation regarding an expression of sorrow or an apology is described as well as the duty of a physician to admit error.