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**SELECTED TRIAL COMPETENCE RULINGS:
USEFUL LESSONS IN COURTS' VIEWS ON BEST
PRACTICES IN COMPETENCE ASSESSMENT**

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Practice guides to mental health assessments of competence to stand trial do not use the few detailed court rulings involving extensive litigation of competency to stand trial issues as instructive guides on matters focused on by judges. Forensic examiners and lawyers may find these rulings useful sources of foundational information. This article presents an experienced criminal defense lawyer's review of rulings that forensic examiners and lawyers should consider especially when the issue of competency to stand trial is likely to be contested and litigated.

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRAUMA AND MENTAL HEALTH
ISSUES AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN, WHITE, AND HISPANIC
MALE JUVENILE OFFENDERS**

**Roslyn M. Caldwell-Gunes, Ph.D., Valerie I. Romero, Ph.D.
and N. Clayton Silver, Ph.D.**

This study examined and compared the relationships between trauma and mental health issues (anger and irritability, somatization, substance use, anxiety, and depression) among 381 African American, White, and Hispanic male juvenile offenders. In general, results revealed that statistically significant positive relationships existed between trauma and mental health issues. Moreover, trauma was significantly predictive of mental health issues for each racial/ethnic group. White offenders scored higher on somatic complaints and substance use as compared to African Americans and Hispanics. Furthermore, White offenders scored higher in relation to anger than did Hispanics. These results suggest the need for prevention and intervention strategies that target the impact of trauma exposure and subsequent mental health effects among male juvenile offenders.

**COMMENTARY: PRESUMPTION OF INNOCENCE, BURDEN OF PROOF,
AND REASONABLE DOUBT**

Ralph Slovenko, J.D., Ph.D.