Assessing Innovations for Child Victims in the Courtroom

Garrett Harris, Colin Hayton, Annamaria Hidalgo, Mason McCullough, & Cole Watson
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Dawn McQuiston
Department of Psychology
Wofford College

The Debate

- Argument against: Defense
  - Juror bias
- Argument in support: Prosecution
  - Maintains integrity of the courtroom


- Burglary case
- Bases of appeal
  - Use of facility dog
  - Court rejected appeal

Burd and McQuiston (2014)

- Mock trial involving child molestation
- Facility dog v. teddy bear v. nothing
- No evidence of dogs creating bias
Current Study

- Looking more closely at the impact of facility dogs

Method

- N=240
- Partial trial transcript
- Participants read and responded to their assigned transcript

Hypothesis

- Crime Seriousness x Innovation Type interaction

Results: Guilt and Sentencing

Results: Evaluations of Victim

Results: Evaluations of Defendant
Discussion

- Findings support the use of facility dogs
- Limitations
  - Lack of visual stimuli
- Future directions
  - Video recording/live mock trial
  - Defendant use of facility dog
  - Level of interaction with dog