

False eyewitness testimonies are the main source of false convictions. However, despite the rapid development of forensic techniques, they remain an important source of information for the court. Research on factors influencing memory distortions in testimonies has been ongoing since the 1970s. A poorly known, promising research direction is the phenomenon of memory distrust, i.e. the condition in which a witness ceases to believe in his or her own memory abilities, as a result of which he or she becomes susceptible to suggestions from others and external clues.

The aim of the project is to analyze the influence of memory distrust on the distortion of eyewitness testimonies combined with other factors moderating or mediating this influence: imagination abilities, imagination abilities, anxiety, self-esteem, compliance and awareness of discrepancies between one's own memory and information from other sources. It is planned to conduct five experiments in five different paradigms of memory distortion research. The research will examine whether memory distrust is in fact a predictor of memory distortions, and if so, what are the conditions of this influence - what are its moderators and mediators.

Studying memory distrust may contribute to forensic psychology by providing better understanding of why witnesses yield to misinformation instead of using their own memory. This may help to form guidelines for the interrogators as regards interrogation of witnesses with memory distrust. Consequently, this may contribute to less errors made by the judicial system.