

Title: The Role of Implicit Theories in the Quality of Forensic Psychological Assessment.

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Abstract (191 words)

There has been increased emphasis on the scientific foundation of expert testimony (*Daubert v. Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals, Inc.*, 1993). Despite the advances on forensic psychological assessment, particularly in the form of validated tools or specialized guidelines there remains considerable inconsistency in the quality of forensic assessment practice (Heilbrun, DeMatteo, Marczyk & Goldstein, 2008). The question we raise is to what extent do experts' implicit theories interfere in the quality of the work provided by forensic psychologists. To achieve this goal we will begin by theoretically framing the concept of implicit theories within both social psychology (Levy, Placks & Dweck, 1999) and psychoanalytic literatures (Silvan, 2005). Furthermore, we will orient the results of this theoretical survey in the search of a methodology that will later allow the exploration of the role played by implicit theories in a context where these are construed as completely opposed to expert's 'scientific' opinion. This methodology will be tested in a group of 35 forensic psychologists, focussing on expert's reporting practices. Results will be discussed in terms of the consequences that the articulation between implicit and expert knowledge may have for the quality of forensic psychological assessments.