



**International Forensic Research Institute Frontiers in Forensic Science Seminar Series**

## **Cognitive bias in forensic investigations**

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Where: WC 130

The concept of cognitive bias can be broadly described as a mental shortcut that guides and ultimately simplifies human decision-making. In many situations, these shortcuts are efficient, save time and help humans process information swiftly and often accurately. However, in some contexts these shortcuts can be problematic as a wealth of psychological research demonstrates that having preconceptions (e.g., that an event occurred or a particular person was involved) can cause an individual to focus on information that supports his or her preconceptions, while ignoring information that may contradict the initial belief. In investigative contexts, cognitive bias has been identified as an overarching issue in collecting and processing eyewitness evidence, and suspect evidence. Recently, the National Academy of Sciences has also highlighted the potential for cognitive bias when collecting, analyzing and interpreting forensic evidence. The seminar will provide the theoretical and scientific background of cognitive bias in human decision making and outline the various forms of and parallels between cognitive biases throughout investigations. Recent research and policy recommendations will be discussed.

