Suspect Suggestibility During Police Interrogations

Brooke Kindelsperger
Does the threat of interrogation mobilize suspects' ability to cope?
Stress and Coping Framework

- Stress is adaptive
  - Signals the presence of a threat
  - Mobilizes coping response
- Negative effects in long-term
Mobilization

- A general response to a threat
- Signs of mobilization
  - Physiological arousal
  - Defensive emotions
  - Goal directed behaviors
  - Attention and Memory
  - Resistance to Interrogative Influence
Suggestibility
Predictions

- An active stress response mobilizes suspects to resist interrogative influence
- Reduces suspects suggestibility
Method

- Confederate
- Logic problems: 2 individual, 2 team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Guilty</th>
<th>Innocent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accused</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Accused</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Measures

- Mobilization
- Suggestibility
Suggestibility Measure

- Read a short story about a couple helping a boy with a runaway bike
- 15 leading questions
Does the treat of police interrogation mobilize suspects ability to cope?

- Yes
- Heart rate, systolic blood pressure, and diastolic blood pressure.
Does the threat increase resistance during the early phases of interrogation?

- Yield 1
- Yield 2
- Shift
Summary

- Does the threat of interrogation mobilize suspects' ability to cope?
- Results support a biphasic pattern
Questions?