The effects of face-to-face versus live video-feed interviewing on children’s event reports

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Purpose: The purpose of the study was to recent advances in technology have raised a potentially promising service to overcome difficulties associated with remote witnesses: live video-feed interviews. The efficacy of this mode of interviewing lacks empirical evidence, particularly with children in an investigative context.

Methods: This study explored the effects of live video-feed compared to face-to-face interviewing on the memory reports of 100 children (aged 5-12). Children participated in an innocuous event and were interviewed one to two days later by experienced interviewers.

Results: Analyses indicated that live video-feed interviewing was just as effective as face-to-face interviewing in terms of the accuracy and informativeness of children’s accounts. Video-feed interviews, however, required a higher number of clarification prompts compared to face-to-face interviews. These findings were not influenced by children’s familiarity with technology.

Conclusions: An initial test of live video-feed interviewing indicates it is a safe and effective method for interviewing children about an innocuous event.