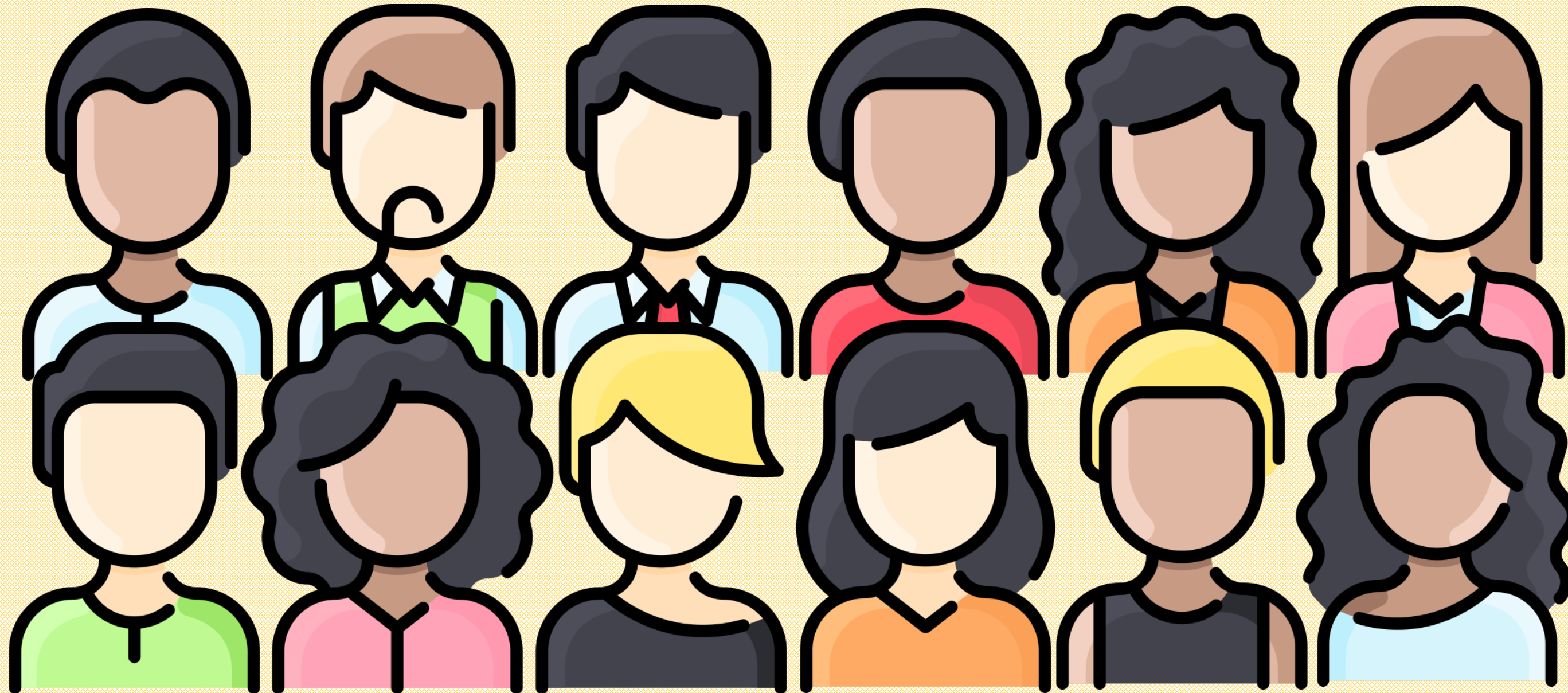


The effect of providing rape myth information to jurors in rape trials: A systematic review

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1. What are Rape Myths?

Burt (1980) defined rape myths (RMs) as 'prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims and rapists' (p.213).



Examples include: 1) rape victims report immediately
2) rape always results in injury.

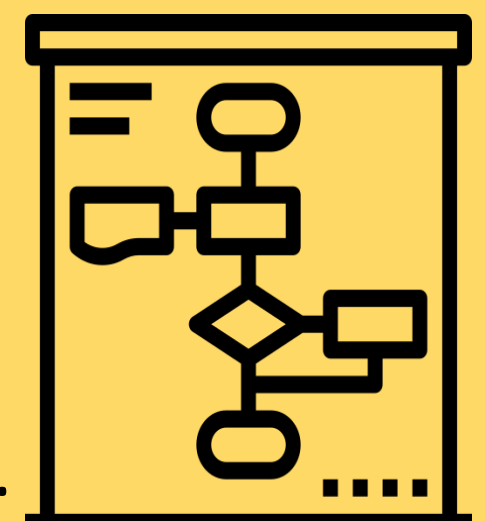
2. Review Rationale

RMs have been consistently shown to impact upon jury decision-making. Although various proposals have been made as to how to address this, such as the provision of judicial directions to jurors, little is known about the impact of proposed approaches. Therefore, this review synthesised and appraised research that assessed such approaches, as to inform future practice.



3. Method

Search strings combined terms that captured: rape myths, mock-trials, and rape myth dispelling approaches.



12 databases (including Education, Psychology, and Criminal Justice databases) were searched, filtered to return peer-reviewed papers published in English from 1980-2020. Duplicates were removed from the search results and 2,676 articles were screened.

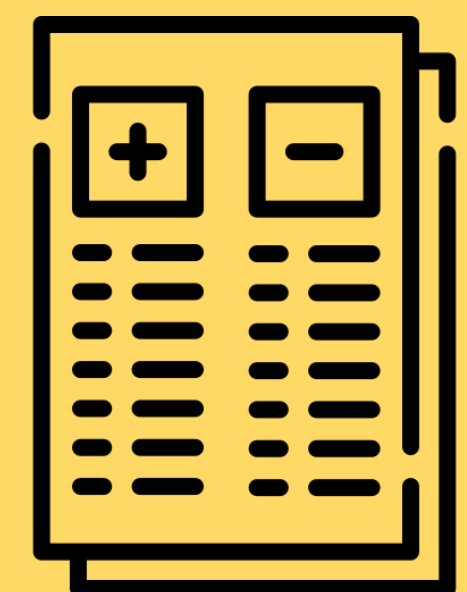
Papers were included if they assessed the impact of providing rape myth information to 'jurors' within a mock-trial. They were excluded if the information concerned male rape myths.

6 included papers were appraised based on the process used by Dinos et al. (2015) regarding internal validity (issues concerning research design) and external validity (generalisability).

4. Key Findings and Recommendations

Some approaches were reported to be effective, however findings were mixed:

- Prosecution statements did not reduce jurors' reliance on RMs throughout decision-making.
- Judicial directions and expert witness statements were effective in addressing some RMs.
- To enhance the effectiveness of any approach, explanations of key issues could be provided, such as explaining *why* victims may delay reporting, rather than facts being stated alone.



There were several issues with regards to internal and external validity:

- Internal validity could be enhanced through the use of random allocation and validated measures.
- To enhance external validity, trial re-enactments (based on real court transcripts) should be presented, rather than vignettes, and participants should be required to provide unanimous verdicts after deliberating.