

## Challenges Facing the Expert Witness Relying on Subjective Information

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### Abstract

Forensic Scientists increasingly face challenges when testifying about pattern evidence. "Pattern evidence" here denotes fingerprint evidence, firearms, tool marks, footwear, tire impressions, handwriting, bite marks, etc. Critics question whether experts using only subjective information can provide the court with reliable information. Detractors maintain that objective data, meaning statistics, are necessary for the expert to form an opinion in court cases. Some critics have used the depreciatory term "junk science" to suggest that certain forensic science disciplines have little or no validity and should no longer be used. This presentation discusses steps that research might take to address this issue, the ramifications on relying on statistics in expert testimony and challenges to experts in explaining statistics to lay consumers of expert evidence.

### Biography:

Barry A. J. Fisher served as the Crime Laboratory Director for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Fisher is a member of several professional organizations:

he is a distinguished fellow and past president of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, past president of the International Association of Forensic Sciences and past president of the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors.