

Davis, J.P. (2013). Super-recognisers in the police: Exceptional at face recognition, highly meticulous or viewing the right CCTV footage at the wrong time - for the criminal? *University of Kent Research Seminar Series*, February 2013.

Many factors influence identification accuracy, including facial familiarity and distinctiveness, viewpoint, age and stress. There are also individual differences in face perception and recognition. Some people exhibit developmental prosopagnosia, or face blindness; while others possess “super-recognition” ability. These extremes may be symptomatic of a normal continuum of face recognition ability. In recent research, police officers (n = 21) who have identified hundreds of offenders from sometimes extremely poor quality CCTV footage completed a battery of cognitive tests. Their performance was compared with controls. Some of the officers were exceptionally better than controls on some tests, particularly when naming highly degraded celebrity images, taken more than 10-years beforehand. Performance was highly correlated with an unfamiliar face array test. However, face processing did not correlate with a flowers recognition task. The applied and theoretical implications will be discussed.