

'Black looking' features may affect juries

May 25 2006

A study suggests men with "black-looking" features are more likely to get a U.S. death sentence than other people found guilty of killing a white person.

But Stanford University researchers say the relationship between physical appearance and the death sentence disappears when both murderers and their victims are black.

"Race clearly matters in criminal justice in ways in which people may or may not be consciously aware," said Jennifer Eberhardt, associate professor of psychology. "When black defendants are accused of killing whites, perhaps jurors use the degree to which these defendants appear stereotypically black as a proxy for criminality, and then punish accordingly."

Eberhardt's findings are published in the May issue of the journal *Psychological Science*, co-written with Cornell University Law Professor Sheri Lynn Johnson; and with former graduate students Paul Davies, now an assistant professor at the University of California-Los Angeles; and Valerie Purdie-Vaughns, now a Yale University assistant professor.

Copyright 2006 by United Press International

Citation: 'Black looking' features may affect juries (2006, May 25) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2006-05-black-features-affect-juries.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.