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Are lawyers prey to probability misconceptions irrespective of mathematical education?

Pehkonen, Erkki, 21. conference of the International Group for the Psychology of Mathematics Education (PME). ,. 41-48 (1997).

Recently there has been a trend towards admitting expert statistical evidence in UK court cases. There have been a number of cases, however, in which outcomes have been distorted by statistical or probabilistic misconceptions and by faulty inference. Typically, lawyers receive no training in these areas apart from their compulsory school mathematical education. The data from five groups of trainee lawyers demonstrate that their errors in assessing likelihoods persist irrespective of the level and type of mathematical education that they have received. The typical approaches and content of mathematical education at school or college need re-thinking. Data from two other groups of subjects (one of statistical educators) with different types of mathematical backgrounds were available for comparison purposes. (orig.)

Classification: K50