Perspectives on Error Reporting in Forensic Casework and Testimony

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For What It’s Worth ...

• My opinion – The issue of error rates is a legal question, not a scientific one.
  – Can someone please explain to me how identifying an error rate advances science.

• I agree with Joe Bono – Until we can clearly define and measure the numerator and denominator, we are simply arguing for arguments sake.

• I also agree with Jennifer Mnookin – The question of when and why errors occur is more important than error rates.
Premise: Human Error is Human Error regardless of the venue, occupation, or field - only the consequences vary.
Reason (1990)
Genesis of Human Error
The “Swiss Cheese” Model of Human Error

WHAT went wrong.

WHY it went wrong.

Adverse Outcome
Percentage of Human Error Mishaps Associated with Violations

![Graph showing percentage of human error mishaps associated with violations for U.S. Army, U.S. Navy/Marine Corps, and U.S. Air Force over fiscal years 1991 to 1997. The graph indicates variability in the percentage, with peaks and troughs across the years.]
A Culture of Tolerance
Intervention Strategy

- Professionalism
- Enforce the Rules
- Establish Accountability
Did the Intervention Work?

The graph shows the percentage over fiscal years 1991 to 2001. The data indicates a trend where the percentage decreases after the implementation of the intervention. The previous U.S. Navy/Marine Corps mean is shown as a dashed line, indicating a baseline before the intervention.

The intervention appears to have been successful in lowering the percentage, as evidenced by the downward trend post-intervention.
I Agree

“… why errors occur is more important than error rates...”
- Jennifer Mnookin