The Effect of the Area of Visible Sclera on a Person's Perception of another Person's Trustworthiness

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Do people make poor first impressions of a person based on their visible area of their sclera? People make misguided first impressions daily based on the person's physical appearance. In order to test whether eyes have an effect on a physical first impression, the relationship between the visible area of the sclera and rating of trustworthiness and friendliness were tested. Eye size is generally known as the amount of the iris that is visible. Therefore reducing the sclera size, the white area around the iris, will increase iris and eye size. This test was conducted amongst 100 subjects who each reported their rating of trustworthiness and friendliness for the face presented before them. The photographs of each face were manipulated to have a different sclera size, and these faces were randomly displayed in a PowerPoint. The unmodified face was displayed as a control along with two faces with larger sclera sizes and two faces with smaller sclera sizes than that of the control. Results displayed that smaller sclera sizes do indeed result in a perception of a more friendly and trustworthy person. Except for one manipulated face which showed no significant results, the other three faces out of the four displayed a lower trustworthiness and friendliness rating for the largest sclera size in comparison to that of the control and two smallest sizes according to T-Tests taken. These results suggest that as a person's visible area of the sclera decreases, the perception of that person's trustworthiness and friendliness increases.

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