

Do people trust 'hard' neuroscience more than 'soft' psychology?

Imagine a politician from your party is in trouble for alleged misdemeanors. He's been assessed by an expert who says he likely has early-stage Alzheimer's. If this diagnosis is correct, your politician will have to resign, and he'll be replaced by a candidate from an opposing party.

This was the scenario presented to participants in a new study. A vital twist was that half of the 106 student participants read a version of the story in which the dementia expert based his diagnosis on detailed cognitive tests; the other half read a version in which he used a structural MRI brain scan.

Overall, the students found the MRI evidence more convincing than the cognitive tests. For example, 69.8 percent of those given the MRI scenario said the evidence the politician had Alzheimer's was strong and convincing, whereas only 39.6 percent of students given the cognitive tests scenario said the same.

In reality, a diagnosis of probable Alzheimer's will always be made with cognitive tests, with brain scans used to rule out other explanations for any observed test impairments. The researchers said their results are indicative of naive faith in the trustworthiness of brain imaging data.

These new results add to past findings showing people's bias for neuroscience and other "hard" sciences and against psychology. The researchers called for their work to be extended into other contexts, and for the allure of neuroscience to be probed more deeply.

Read full, original story: [People Are More Willing to Dismiss Evidence From Psychology Than Brain Science](#)