



Volume 10 | 3

Research & Advocacy Digest

Linking Advocates & Researchers

Understanding Forensic DNA

Letter From The Editor

ANDREA PIPER, ADVOCACY SPECIALIST, WCSAP

Turn on the television on any given day and you will likely happen across some crime drama programming like *Law & Order* or *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*. These crime shows and others like them are highly popular and dominate the television line-up. The shows capture audiences by spinning intriguing mystery stories that are a blend of reality and fiction. In fact many of the Law & Order shows are advertised as being “ripped from the headlines”. They attempt to incorporate modern forensic technologies, investigation techniques, and technical language into authentic programming. However, what is presented on television is quite different from true forensics and medico-legal investigations.

The forensic tools and techniques shown on television may not even be real, or the manner in which they are being used is incorrect and sensationalized. For the record, DNA results never come back in an hour, DNA and fingerprints aren’t at every scene, a computer doesn’t pop up a picture of an identified subject from a finger print hit, and taking a case through the legal system takes significantly more time than ever shown. Most of these shows are only an hour, so they have to condense the whole spectrum of crime solving and prosecution into that timeframe.

I do not expect these shows to represent the true way investigations are handled; after all it is drama television. However, it is important to note how popular these shows are and how they inform the general public knowledge base and shape perceptions of forensic tools and investigative techniques. This effect has been fittingly dubbed the *CSI effect*.

The *CSI effect* is important for us as a sexual assault movement to examine because those same viewers are jurors, survivors, families

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of survivors, and so forth. The potential ramifications on our judicial process are significant. Jurors may come to expect DNA evidence in all rape cases and to see it as a necessity for conviction. Additionally, they may be more prone to contest forensic data based upon on what they garnered from television.

Survivors too, may believe that what is shown on television is factual and feel extremely frustrated to find out that forensic evidence wasn't present at the scene of their assault, that DNA collected from their rape kit hasn't been processed timely that it didn't yield a match with DNA entered into the combined DNA index system (CODIS). In brief, their expectations may not match their experiences and may create discord and possible reluctance to proceed in the judicial system.

DNA database hits may come months or years after an assault. A DNA hit is when there is a match between two DNA samples in the database (see Washington CODIS within for descriptions of whose DNA is entered into the system). Matches commonly occur between a convicted offender's samples and forensic unknown samples that have been collected from a crime scene. For law enforcement officials, DNA matches can provide them new suspects or investigative leads, link serial cases, or exonerate possible suspects. For survivors, the news of a match can generate a plethora of emotions. It may be relieving and restore a sense of hope and closure or it can be a significant source of anxiety and re-trigger trauma.

Advocates have an important role regarding notifications. They can form collaborative team responses with law enforcement to minimize trauma and be a support person during and after the notifications process. The collaborative opportunities are vast and can potentially become integrated into preexisting community collaborative sexual assault protocols. Advocates interface and collaborate with medico-legal systems and their professionals constantly, i.e., collaboration concepts are not new. However, an advocate's role around notification and debunking forensic mythologies is a relatively new area of consideration for our movement.

Technological advances and popular culture are shifting conceptualization and expectations of DNA and forensics.

Victim blaming dialog has evolved from why were you there to why didn't you deliberately scratch the offender to get DNA evidence under your nails.

Technological advances and popular culture are shifting conceptualization and expectations of DNA and forensics. Victim blaming dialog has evolved from why were you there to why didn't you deliberately scratch the offender to get DNA evidence under your nails. For survivors, it can be yet another layer of guilt and trauma and thoughts of "Why didn't I do that, if I would have maybe there would be some way of proving this really happened to me" can pervade.

This Research and Advocacy Digest issue serves as an initial discussion about DNA considerations and showcases current advocate resource material on the topic with the hope of not only raising awareness, but also starting to move us in Washington State toward thinking about best practice around addressing CSI effects and collaborative relationships for DNA victim notifications.

DNA issues are and will continue to be relevant to our field. They are woven into sexual assault medico-legal procedures and sex offender management issues. New programs and proposed laws will surface.

As advocates we need to be knowledgeable on the topic so we can disseminate correct information, be critical, be objective, and solidly advocate at individual, systems, and policy levels for survivors. ■

A Quick Look at Prominent Forensic Television Myths

-ANDREA PIPER

Andrea Piper, M.S., has a Masters in Forensic and Biological Anthropology. She has worked in both sexual assault/domestic violence advocacy and forensic victim service arenas over the last 8 years. She currently holds the position of Advocacy Specialist at the Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs.

MYTH:

On Television DNA tests and other material evidence tests have near immediate results.

FACT:

Forensic analysis takes time. Yes, some tests are on the spot positive for the presence of blood or semen, but they don't confirm what type or whose it is. They simply guide the technician to collect the sample. Lab analysis can take weeks or months. Depending on the type of evidence and its condition it may 1) require several technicians to work on it or 2) need to be exposed to several treatments. Both factors require considerable extra time.

MYTH:

On television collection of evidence is simple- you take a picture and collect it.

FACT:

Proper collection includes extensive documentation of evidence and its location. A combination of detailed notes, sketches, maps and photographs are taken to capture what a scene (in rape exams, the body) looks like. Once an item is touched or collected, the scene is permanently altered; thus why documentation always occurs before any collection efforts. Having solid evidence documentation and collection is essential for scene reconstructive purposes,

withstanding scrutiny in court, and to avoid damage or contamination of evidence.

When we look at TV examples, it is typical to see an investigator hunched over a newly discovered piece of evidence, touching it with part of a glove or without any, maybe taking a picture and then collecting it haphazardly. Often collected items are shown being placed into the same evidence bag. For example, a rape victim's clothes and bedding being combined. A trained technician wouldn't do this to avoid cross contamination. Quality collection is very methodic and time consuming. A rape exam is good example, here the medical examiner is required to follow a step-by-step procedure for evidence collection and there is a chain of custody for evidence. These forensic exams are usually a couple hours in length due to extensive documentation and collection needs.

MYTH:

All crime scene responders are forensic technicians.

FACT:

Police (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners or other designated medical personnel for rape exams) are trained on how to properly secure and collect evidence, but are not forensic scientists. A forensic unit is not always deployed, unlike what is commonly showed on T.V.

MYTH:

A forensic technician on television can conduct any needed forensic analysis duty.

FACT:

Television crime dramas usually have a couple of "super technicians" that can do any analyst duty from running ballistics to processing DNA or doing computer data recovery. In reality, forensic laboratories have specialty units with highly trained professionals in that area of expertise. A single piece of evidence may pass from one technician to another or one unit to another as needed. Some services, like forensic anthropology or forensic entomology are com-

monly contracted out to external professionals.

MYTH:

Forensic labs and crime scene mobiles have highly sophisticated equipment and kits for performing tests in the field.

FACT:

Crime labs typically do not have enough funding to purchase the most current equipment and are often short staffed to compensate for essential equipment needs. Kits carry essentials; very few have computer evidence mapping capabilities or a plethora of tech/spy/forensic gadgets as seen on T.V. ■

Facts About CODIS in Washington

- CODIS includes DNA of convicted offenders, forensic casework samples, relatives of missing persons, and unidentified human remains.
- Qualifying offenses that get entered into CODIS according to the Washington State Convicted Felon law passed in July of 2002, enforce that the agencies of the state of Washington are required to collect samples for DNA analysis from the following:
 - All persons (adult and juvenile) convicted of a felony (RCW 43.43.754)
 - All persons (adult and juvenile) convicted of any of the three covered gross misdemeanors: Harassment (RCW 9A.46.020), Stalking (RCW 9A.46.110) or Communication with a minor for immoral purposes (RCW 9.68A.090).

- **Newly Passed Legislation**

Effective June 12, 2008, the following additional offenses will qualify for mandatory DNA sample collection:

Assault in the 4th degree with sexual motivation (RCW 9A.36.041)

Custodial sexual misconduct in the 2nd degree (RCW 9A.44.170)

Failure to register (RCW 9A.44.130)

Patronizing a prostitute (RCW 9A.88.110)

Sexual misconduct with a minor in the 2nd degree (RCW 9A.44.096)

Violation of a sexual assault protection order granted under chapter 7.90 RCW

(continued)

Any adult or juvenile who is required to register under RCW 9A.44.130 (sex and kidnapping offenders)

Anyone incarcerated or convicted for an above offense on or after June 12, 2008, is required to submit a DNA sample.

- The Washington State Patrol CODIS laboratory receives an average of 1,500 convicted offender samples per month.
- At the national level of CODIS (*as of January 2008*) - There are 5,416,043 convicted offender DNA profiles in the NDIS (National DNA Index System) database. NDIS also holds 208,115 forensic specimens (*samples from crime scenes*). All 50 states, Puerto Rico, the FBI, and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory contribute DNA profiles to NDIS.
- In Washington State (*as of March 2008*) - There are 110,886 convicted offender profiles in the state database. There are ~45,000 convicted offender samples awaiting DNA analysis. 1,808 forensic specimens are in the state database.
- On a weekly basis samples from the Washington State database are compared to the samples in NDIS to see if there are any matches.
- Washington State has had over 650 hits since May of 2001 when CODIS was fully implemented nationwide!
- Jails, prisons, corrections centers, courts, and police departments across the state send their submissions to the lab (*1,500 samples a month*).
- Approximately 1,000 convicted offender DNA samples are typed in-house monthly.

*Information taken from
www.wsp.wa.gov/crime/crimlabs.htm
and reprinted with permission.*

A New DNA Project In Washington

The Washington Police and Sheriffs association has secured funding to pay for DNA analysis in stranger rape cases. Dawn Larsen who oversees the project sat down with me to share more about this new funding and its relevance to sexual assault advocacy efforts.

The DNA Stranger Rape Project

INTERVIEWED BY ANDREA PIPER,
ADVOCACY EDUCATION DIRECTOR, WCSAP

Dawn Larsen, M.A., who is the Director of Projects for Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, current projects include sex offender community notification, victim notification, the DNA project, and protective order service notification. Dawn is also a member of the faculty for the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy Advocate Academy. She started 23 years ago as a volunteer for Safe-Place, has worked with crime victims in various community agencies, and is a licensed mental health therapist with her primary work focused on victims of crime.

WCSAP: Can you share with the readers a little bit about yourself and your work on the DNA Stranger Rape Project?

DL: I am the Director of Projects for the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC). In this position, I oversee numerous state projects. One such project is the Stranger Rape DNA project. I became involved with the project in fall 2007 with a primary focus of involving victim advocates in educating their communities and the people they serve about the program.

WCSAP: Can you explain for our readers who aren't familiar with the project what it is and

how it is funded?

DL: The Stranger DNA project is a program aimed at reducing the number of rapists at large in Washington by collecting unknown suspect DNA from a crime scene and/or victim. The project allows for collected samples to be outsourced to a private lab for rapid turnaround processing. This is done to support expedited investigations and to assist State Crime labs who are already working diligently to minimize backlogs and process DNA submissions.

Local law enforcement agencies and Washington State Crime labs can send evidence to the contracted private lab for testing upon WASPC approval. The lab guarantees results back to the submitting agency within 30 days. The results are entered into the state and national DNA databases for comparative analysis. About 30% of the time, the entered information is connected to other crime information. This greatly assists in continuing the investigation and provides the possibility of case resolution.

Partnerships between law enforcement, community hospitals, and sexual assault victim advocates are essential for advancement of this project. Collectively, by knowing about the project and how to access it, they can work to increase the number of DNA cases processed, increase the number of DNA positives matches in the database, support sexual assault investigations, and ideally remove rapists from the community and provide a piece of closure to victims.

The project is currently federally funded until 2011 with federal earmark dollars.

WCSAP: The project is called the Stranger Rape Project. How is stranger defined?

DL: Stranger is defined as a person the victim doesn't know beyond a first name i.e., there is no way for a victim to verify the offender's

name and address. For example, a survivor is assaulted by a person they see on the bus regularly and with whom they have chatted casually on occasion, but is unable to identify the offender with a full name or address. By project definition this qualifies as a stranger assault and evidence would be eligible for submission.

This definition may be broader than how some service professionals currently classify stranger assaults. Case in point, when I present this scenario to service providers' groups I get varied responses, even CSAP to CSAP. Some label this scenario as an acquaintance rape because the victim and offender knew each other on some level, while others think it meets stranger rape classification criteria. The importance of having a working definition between collaborative partners is evident.

Remember, unknown suspect sexual assaults happen to children also. Often very young children have a difficult time identifying their offender. Using DNA could eliminate the need for children to testify.

The project processes unknown suspect sexual assault DNA, DNA related to sexually motivated homicides and sexually motivated burglaries. The DNA processed may be forensic evidence from a rape kit, clothing, sheets, blood, semen, or other potential evidence properly collected from a crime scene or person. The project can also pay for exclusionary DNA testing. For example, a person is raped at a party where there were several unknown individuals to the victim, those individuals once located by law enforcement could voluntarily submit their DNA (have it collected and sent in by law enforcement) to be excluded from the suspect list. Additionally, the project can pay for the forensic examiner to appear in court to testify about the DNA findings if necessary.

WCSAP: How does outsourcing a DNA test assist rape survivors in Washington State?

DL: Outsourcing DNA helps in several ways by assisting investigations directly and indirectly. Directly, it provides an efficient means for unknown suspects to be investigated. Indirectly, it reduces the work load at the state crime labs, thereby allowing more time for them to process other sexual assault cases.

DNA has been utilized for over 20 years as an essential law enforcement tool. Due to high utilization in investigations, Washington State Crime labs receive over 3000 requests for DNA analysis annually. This demand is more than the labs can currently process and there are approximately 1000 backlogged cases. The need for additional funding to crime labs has been addressed by the governor and legislature, but it will take at least two years to increase labs' capabilities including having enough trained and certified technicians.

This project can help reduce backlogs of new evidence and in turn promote timely investigation and prosecution.

WCSAP: In Washington State what is the CSAP reported incidence of stranger rape vs. law enforcement reported numbers?

DL: CSAPs reported 600 stranger rapes in 2007. Unfortunately, I do not have the number of reported stranger rapes for the state, because law enforcement statistics do not break out offender relationship information. However, in 2007, the DNA stranger project outsourced 53 cases. That is under 10% of cases reported by CSAPs to the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy. I believe the discrepancy clearly shows the need to heighten the awareness of the project with victim advocates, medical personnel, SANE nurses, law enforcement personnel and prosecutors. Victim advocates have an important role in advancing utilization of this program by informing and facilitating discussions with collaborative medical, law enforcement and legal partners.

WCSAP: How would a person access the DNA Stranger Rape Program? What is the advocate's role?

DL: Access to the program is limited to law enforcement and State Crime labs. They fill out a request for submission form that comes to WASPC for review. Complete details can be found online at www.waspc.org under projects/programs. As I mentioned earlier advocates have an important role in working with their community partners to ensure information is disbursed about the program. Also, they have a direct role supporting survivors and offering them factual information about what DNA is and isn't and to discuss what a positive, negative, or no DNA result means to them in their healing journey.

WCSAP: We know that most sexual assaults occur by someone who is known to the victim. What suggestions do you have for sharing this information while remaining conscientious to not inadvertently promote the rape mythology that rape primarily happens by strangers?

DL: Present all information objectively and highlight the project as a tool to address *unknown* suspect offenders. Introduce sexual assault statistics; explore classifications of stranger and acquaintance rape and review the various types of sexual assault (child sexual abuse, intimate partner sexual assault, acquaintance rape, and stranger rape) for the purpose of showing that each type has reporting, investigation and prosecution steps. Make the connection that for stranger rape scenarios, DNA sampling can be one of those steps used to identify offenders and can support investigation and prosecution activities. ■

Building Knowledge

-ANDREA PIPER

Learning about forensic DNA and forensic procedures may feel overwhelming to some. Especially the “I never was very good at science” types, but the good news is, it doesn’t have to be. Remember, knowledge is power, but as advocates it is not necessary to have the same knowledge base as an analyst in order to provide quality supportive services for survivors. Having a basic understanding of what DNA evidence is, where it can be found, how it is processed, and how it is utilized by medico-legal investigators is a good foundational starting block.

New informational materials have been produced by the National Center for Victims of Crime on Understanding DNA that are a fantastic starting point for garnering information on the basics. They conducted a large survey of victim service providers about DNA knowledge and then produced educational materials for victims, victim advocates, and law enforcement (two are reviewed within). The materials are quite informative. They are not specific to sexual assault, but have relevant and extractable material to build upon. To review these materials visit <http://www.ncvc.org> ■

REVIEWS

DNA Knowledge among Victim Service Providers

DNA KNOWLEDGE AMONG VICTIM SERVICE PROVIDERS: RESULTS OF AN ONLINE SURVEY AND MULTIDISCIPLINARY FOCUS GROUP. WASHINGTON, D.C.: THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME, 2008.

-TARA WOLFE

The National Center for Victims of Crime conducted an online survey and focus group in order to get a better picture of the knowledge that victim service providers – victim advocates, medical professionals, prosecutors, and law enforcement officers - have about DNA and its uses. This two year initiative was funded by Applied Biosystems, a leader in forensic DNA technologies, and conducted by NCVC in February 2007 and June 2007. The following are highlights from the report entitled DNA Knowledge among Victim Service Providers: Results of an Online Survey and Multidisciplinary Focus Group (2008).

Online Survey

A 38-question survey was e-mailed out to NCVC members and referral agencies, as well as posted on various victim related listservs. 1,191 people responded and over 750 answered a majority of the questions. Respondents came from a variety of backgrounds, most commonly were domestic violence agencies, prosecutor’s offices, dual domestic violence and sexual assault agencies, and sexual assault agencies. About the same number of people were from rural as were from urban areas, and 24% worked in suburban areas. Victim advocacy was more than half the respondents’ main role and most of them possessed more than five years of experience.

A large majority of the online survey respondents (77%) said that DNA is relevant to their

work; 61% had worked on a case that involved DNA in the past two years (mostly sexual assault cases). Of these professionals – victim advocates, medical professionals, prosecutors, and law enforcement officers – about a quarter of them were directly responsible for providing DNA information to victims. Clearly, most of them had a firm grasp on the basics; however most of them also held misconceptions about DNA profiles, evidence, and databases. For example, investigators often take a “reference sample” from the victim in order to compare it to a potential suspect’s DNA. This reference sample is kept separate from a suspect’s DNA and NOT submitted to the state database. The misconception that a victim’s DNA is also submitted to the state database might potentially be shared with victims (or already held by victims themselves), and victims may fear providing reference samples. This leads to another misconception about forensic DNA profiles: the profiles themselves cannot be used to *identify* people, only to match to other profiles.

People responding to the survey tended to get their information about DNA from prosecutors, police, and sexual assault nurse examiners/sexual assault forensic examiners (SANE/SAFE). Other sources included television, print media, and trainings.

Even though most of the professionals responsible for directly disseminating information to victims felt capable of explaining how DNA could affect their case, 88% said they did not have any written information to provide victims. Of all the questions they get from victims, the most commonly asked unanswerable one was how long it takes to receive DNA testing results.

There were some concerns about DNA that were shared among the online survey respondents, including DNA not being collected often enough and not being stored properly (49%), DNA evidence backlogs (48%), and victim pri-

vacy (42%). These victim-serving professionals overwhelmingly want more training on DNA in order to respond knowledgeably to victim’s questions.

Focus Group

The participants for this focus group met at the NCVC national conference in Washington, D.C. and included professionals from various backgrounds and geographic locations. They included five law enforcement officers, four SANE, four system-based victim witness advocates, three prosecutors, and four community-based victim service providers.

Most of their information about DNA came from “informal sources,” such as co-workers, colleagues, court proceedings, and on-the-job interactions. Like the online survey group, they also agreed that more training was needed, especially from expert, accurate, up-to-date, consistent sources. A majority of the participants said they would like to see telephone or e-mail accessible experts provide technical support and assistance. Websites, e-mail alerts, and printed materials for a cross section of victim service providers were also suggested. Particular focus was put on the need for victim witness advocates to have proper training and the importance was highlighted because of their crucial role in providing support to victims throughout the entire criminal justice process.

Although the focus group participants had more experience overall than the online survey participants, they too felt that victims often requested information that they could not provide, and that victims often felt frustrated with the length of time it takes to complete DNA testing. Not surprisingly, these professionals worked with victims who also held misconceptions, most notably the “CSI effect” (based on a television show, *Crime Scene Investigation*, which provides an entertaining portrayal of forensic science). Other misconceptions that victims reportedly held include beliefs that:

having the perpetrator's DNA will lead to an arrest; DNA is always present at a crime scene and investigators will find it; and bathing or washing will remove all DNA evidence.

This group also focused on the importance of sharing information with victims and suggested that an expert be available to them as well. Victim advocates could also be trained as experts and first responders could have written information with them to give to victims. Any such informational materials need to be available in different languages.

Recommendations and Conclusions

Receiving accurate and timely information and support during the criminal justice process can help alleviate a victim's fear and anxiety. It is also necessary in light of a victim's role as a well informed participant and witness in the process. Written materials, official protocols, and trainings will help ensure that reliable and accurate information is being received by victim-serving professionals. The research conducted here shows a strong need for: basic training, advanced training, cross-training, continual up-to-date information, DNA experts, written materials for victims, and more funding to eliminate DNA backlogs.

With the increasing number of professionals being called upon to help victims understand DNA evidence collection, testing processes, and court uses, keeping everybody informed is a matter of justice for crime victims. ■

DNA & Crime Victims: What Victim Assistance Professionals Need to Know

DNA & CRIME VICTIMS: WHAT VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROFESSIONALS NEED TO KNOW. WASHINGTON, D.C.: THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME, 2008.

-TARA WOLFE

Because the use of DNA evidence in criminal trials is expanding, it is important for those who work with crime victims to understand the process of DNA collection and its potential impact on cases.

Beginning with the basics, sources of DNA include biological material, such as blood, saliva, sweat, urine, skin tissue, and semen. It can be found on bodies, clothing, cigarette butts, drinking glasses, furniture, weapons, and ropes. DNA is most often used in criminal cases that involve sexual assault, child sexual assault/abuse, and homicide.

DNA "profiles" contain sets of identifiers or characteristics that are found at specific points on the DNA molecule; thirteen of these sets constitute a DNA profile. Once a DNA profile is created it is entered into the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), which is a system of national, state, and local databases managed by the FBI. The database is used to compare DNA profiles from known criminal offenders with biological evidence from crime scenes.

CODIS does not contain identifying information about the source of the DNA profile; it appears as a set of numbers. There are strict rules in place protecting individual privacy, and the database does not contain DNA profiles of crime victims. Access to CODIS is restricted to administrators and laboratory staff. All labs must comply with national DNA quality assur-

ance standards and government labs must pass periodic accreditation and auditing.

All fifty states require convicted sex offenders to submit a biological sample for DNA profiling, and some may request samples from victims as a “reference sample.” This reference sample is used to compare against other samples gathered, and in the case of a sexual assault, reference samples may be collected from any individual the victim has had consensual sex with in the previous four days. Again, this is to compare to other samples gathered, and it is NOT entered into CODIS. The victim’s name is part of the case file, however.

DNA evidence should be collected as soon as possible. Environmental factors such as heat and humidity have an adverse impact on the preservation of biological materials. In sexual assault cases, federal guidelines encourage collection of DNA evidence within 72 hours; however that deadline has been expanded by some programs to 96 hours due to advances in technology. After it has been collected in a timely manner and stored properly, DNA evidence can be utilized at any time.

The handling of DNA samples is done through a “chain of command,” beginning with law enforcement. Each person handling the samples must be trained properly because credibility of evidence in court is of the utmost importance.

Whether the DNA matches the profile of a suspect is the big question. If a match does come back, it means there is high probability that the suspect contributed to the biological material found at/on the crime scene. While this is powerful evidence, it is not proof alone and does not eliminate the need for victim/witness testimony; eyewitness identification, victim input, proof of intent, and other evidence is still crucial (“DNA & Crime Victims” 10). If the DNA does not match, it means the suspect did not leave biological material at/on the crime

scene. However, the lack of a match does not mean the suspect did not commit the crime. DNA analysis can also be inconclusive.

Both types of DNA – mitochondrial and nuclear – are used in testing, and DNA testing is considered highly reliable (6). Although humans share 99 percent of the same DNA, the remaining 1 percent provides enough variation to differentiate between people (except for identical twins). It is unlikely that two random people have the same DNA profile (7).

As mentioned above, all fifty states require collection of DNA profiles from convicted sex offenders, and an attempt is being made to expand the number and types of crimes that qualify for DNA collection. DNA collection is not without controversy. Concerns about collecting DNA from all arrestees range from civil liberties violations to exacerbation of DNA backlogs. On the other hand, proponents argue that the process is similar to fingerprinting and could potentially save countless victims from repeat offenders.

DNA testing does cost money. It is estimated that cases with one victim and one suspect cost \$1000, and the cost is increased when there are multiple suspects and additional items to be tested (7). A state’s victim compensation fund often covers the cost, and in some places a law enforcement agency, prosecutor’s office, or special fund pays for DNA testing.

Even with all the technology and advancements being made in DNA collection and analysis, there may still be times when DNA evidence may not be available or useful. The crime scene may have been contaminated or there might not be any biological evidence. Lack of training or resources may be cited as an issue, but the federal government can provide financial support, and this reason alone should not prohibit DNA collection. ■

DNA Resources

VIDEOS:

DNA: CRITICAL ISSUES FOR THOSE WHO WORK WITH VICTIMS

This 29-minute DVD is intended to raise awareness about the advances and impact that DNA evidence can have on solving criminal cases. With all the advances in technology and improvements in the use of DNA, it is important for victim advocates, criminal justice practitioners, and others who work with crime victim/survivors to be aware of opportunities.

The video highlights several victim/survivor's experiences, particularly with sexual assault. From their own perspectives, three different victim/survivors talk about what the forensic process was like for them and how important each person was along the way. There is consideration given to the concerns and frustrations victim/survivors may feel about the processing of DNA evidence in a criminal case, especially when that process is slow to meet their expectations.

Highlights include a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner's advice and explanation of the SANE role; video shots of DNA collection and analysis techniques; and the emphasis on processing the DNA collection, even if it is years later. In fact, several of the DNA profiles were matched to a suspect after considerable time had lapsed, and some of those victim/survivors' cases saw convictions.

This brief video is a good introduction to the usefulness of DNA in stranger perpetrated crimes. It may be particularly useful in establishing or updating Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) roles and protocols. ■

SEXUAL ASSAULT EXAMINATION: ESSENTIAL FORENSIC TECHNIQUES AND INSTRUCTIONAL REFERENCE GUIDE CD-ROM - BY THE AMERICAN FORENSIC NURSES

This one hour DVD with reference guide is intended for review by sexual assault examiners, victim advocates and law enforcement. It shows rape exam evidence collection techniques and procedures for Sexual Assault Examiners.

It discusses the role of the sexual assault team members, interview processes, details of the medical-legal examination, follow-up care concerns, chain of custody and evidence documentation needs.

It does contain a violent sexual assault stranger re-enactment that viewers should be aware of before preview. ■

*Both of these materials are available
in the WCSAP library.*

Online Resources:

www.ncvc.org

www.dna.gov

www.waspc.org

[http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/
pubs-sum/209493.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/pubs-sum/209493.htm)

www.wsp.wa.gov/crime/crimlabs.html

New at the WCSAP Library

The WCSAP Library maintains a unique collection of more than 6,000 books, articles, journals, audio cassettes, video tapes, films, and other educational resources that focus on issues related to sexual assault prevention, advocacy and treatment. And as a WCSAP member, they are available to you.

Our collection provides you with resources on everything from legal and medical issues, to best practices in prevention, sexual assault dynamics and treatment, advocacy, cultural competency, child abuse, organizational development, training manuals, sex offender characteristics, bullying prevention curricula, and much, much more. And we're continuously adding more. To borrow materials, simply contact Andrea at andrea@wcsap.org

<p>TITLE: How Long Does it Have to Hurt CITATION: Mather, C. and Debye, K (2004). How Long Does it Have to Hurt. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco. MEDIUM: Book</p>	<p>TITLE: Women and Media: International Perspectives. CITATION: Ross, K. and Byerly, C. (2004). Women and Media: International Perspectives. Blackwell Publishing, Malden. MEDIUM: Book</p>
<p>TITLE: Generation Myspace: Helping Your Teen Survive Online Adolescence CITATION: Kelsey, C. (2007). Generation Myspace: Helping your teen survive online adolescence. Avlon Publishing, New York. MEDIUM: Book</p>	<p>TITLE: Color of Violence the Incite! Anthology CITATION: Incite! Women of Color against Violence.(2006). Color of Violence the Incite! Anthology. South End Press, Cambridge. MEDIUM: Book</p>
<p>TITLE: Full Frontal Feminism CITATION: Valenti, J. (2007). Full Frontal Feminism. Seal Press. Emeryville. MEDIUM: Book</p>	<p>TITLE: Global Trafficking in Women and Children CITATION: Ebbe, O. and Das, D.(2008).Global Trafficking in Women and Children. CRC Press, Boca Raton. MEDIUM: Book</p>
<p>TITLE: Not Child's Play: An Anthology on Brother Sister Incest CITATION: Shaw, R. (2000).Not Child's Play: An anthology on brother sister incest. Lunchbox press, Takoma Park. MEDIUM: Book</p>	<p>TITLE: Men Speak Out: Views on Gender, Sex and Power CITATION: Tarrant, S. (2008). Men Speak Out: Views on gender, sex and power. Routledge, New York. MEDIUM: Book</p>
<p>TITLE: The Women's Movement Against Sexual Harassment. CITATION: Baker, C. (2008). The Women's Movement Against Sexual Harassment. Cambridge University Press. New York. MEDIUM: Book</p>	<p>TITLE: The Revolution will not be funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex CITATION: Incite! Women of Color against Violence(2007). The Revolution will not be funded: Beyond the non-profit industrial complex. South End Press, Cambridge. MEDIUM: Book</p>
<p>TITLE: Pornified: How Pornography is Transforming our Lives, Relationships, and our Families. CITATION: Paul, P. (2005). Pornified: how pornography is transforming our lives, relationships, and our families. Henry Holt and Co., New York. MEDIUM: Book</p>	<p>TITLE: Becoming a Successful Manager CITATION: Grossman, J. and Parkinson, R. (2002). Becoming a successful manager. McGraw Hill, NY. MEDIUM: Book</p>

<p>TITLE: Interviewing Children About Sexual Abuse: Controversies and Best Practice CITATION: Faller, K. (2007). Interviewing Children About Sexual Abuse: Controversies and Best Practice. Oxford University Press, Oxford. MEDIUM: Book</p>
<p>TITLE: Safe Beginnings: Protecting our Children from Sexual Abuse CITATION: Anderson, O. and Pacey, S. (2003). Safe Beginnings: Protecting our Children from Sexual Abuse. Blue Tower Training Center, Decatur. MEDIUM: Book</p>
<p>TITLE: My body...my choice. CITATION: Pacey, S. Blue Tower Training Center. MEDIUM: Book</p>
<p>TITLE: Sexual Assault Examination: Essential Forensic Techniques and Instructional Reference Guide CD-ROM CITATION: American Forensic Nurses MEDIUM: DVD And CD ROM</p>
<p>TITLE: DNA: Critical Issues for Those Who Work with DNA CITATION: OCV, DOJ MEDIUM: DVD</p>
<p>TITLE: Close to Home CITATION: Roth, V. and Dickerson, A. Mark McGwire Foundation for Children MEDIUM: DVD</p>
<p>TITLE: Talk for Parents and Kids Safety DVD CITATION: Good Touch Bad Touch (2007) MEDIUM: DVD</p>
<p>TITLE: The Parent Talk: A Conversation with Parents CITATION: Good-Touch Bad Touch (2007) MEDIUM: DVD</p>
<p>TITLE: Spin the Bottle: Sex, Lies and Alcohol CITATION: The Media Education Foundation featuring Katz, J. and Kilborne, J. MEDIUM: DVD</p>
<p>TITLE: Illinois Voices: Changing Attitudes, Changing Lives CITATION: Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Developmental Disabilities MEDIUM: DVD</p>

<p>TITLE: Respect: An Equal Opportunity Attitude CITATION: Blue Tower Training Center MEDIUM: DVD</p>
<p>TITLE: The Undetected Rapist CITATION: National Judicial Education Program MEDIUM: DVD</p>
<p>TITLE: Girls Moving Beyond Myth CITATION: Media Education Foundation MEDIUM: DVD</p>
<p>TITLE: War Zone CITATION: Media Education Foundation MEDIUM: DVD</p>
<p>TITLE: I Like Me: Growing Songs for Healthy Children CITATION: Blue Tower Training Center MEDIUM: CD</p>
<p>TITLE: Helping Sexual Assault Survivors with Multiple Victimization Needs CITATION: Davies, Jill MEDIUM: CD</p>
<p>TITLE: Helping Sexual Assault Survivors with Multiple Victimization Needs CITATION: Davies, J. (2007). Helping Sexual Assault Survivors with Multiple Victimization Needs. MEDIUM: Publication</p>
<p>TITLE: Survivors Technology: An Interactive Safety Planning Tool CITATION: NNEDV MEDIUM: CD ROM</p>
<p>TITLE: Foundation Skills for Trainers CITATION: National Institute of Corrections/DOJ MEDIUM: DVD and CD and ROM</p>
<p>TITLE: Dream Worlds III CITATION: Media Education Foundation MEDIUM: DVD</p>
<p>TITLE: Speak Up: Improving the lives of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Youth CITATION: Media Education Foundation MEDIUM: DVD</p>
<p>TITLE: She Stole My Voice CITATION: The American Academy for Film and Gender Studies MEDIUM: DVD</p>

Opportunity for Input

Did you read or author an article you'd like to contribute for review in the Research and Advocacy Digest?

If so contact the editor, Andrea Piper, for more information about guideline submissions.

What topics would you like to see covered in upcoming issues of Research and Advocacy Digest?

Send your ideas to: andrea@wcsap.org



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