



B98 Detection and Identification of Personal Care Products in Sexual Assault Cases

JoAnne Marzowski, BS, MS, PhD, Washington State Patrol Crime Laboratory, 2203 Airport Way South, Suite 250, Seattle, WA 98134; Sonja M. Peterson, Hamline University, MB1513, 1536 Hewitt Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55104; and Ursula M. P. Toole, Chaminade University of Honolulu, 11505 SE 85th Lane, Newcastle, WA 98056*

The goal of this presentation is to detect the presence of personal care products on submitted evidence in sexual assault cases. To chemically identify key ingredients in the personal care products so as to demonstrate an association between the victim and suspect in the assault.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by demonstrating an evidentiary link between a victim and a suspect in sexual assault cases when there is no DNA evidence available.

Personal care products, such as ointments, creams, lotions, and personal lubricants, used by assailants in sexual assault cases may serve as important evidence when there is no DNA present. Detection and subsequent identification of key components of personal care products on clothing and in sexual assault kits may also provide supportive case evidence and corroborate victim/suspect statements.

A representative sample of sixteen personal care products, including hydrophobic petrolatum based ointments, water based lotions, sunscreens, face and hand creams, were examined in this study. These products were smeared onto clothing and cotton swabs to simulate case evidence. A flow-chart used for the detection of smears and analysis of key components of each type of personal product will be presented.

This study describes the detection of smears on clothing and cotton swabs using a combination of visual observation, short and long wavelength ultraviolet light, the forensic light source, and attenuated total reflectance Fourier transform infrared (ATR-FTIR) spectroscopy. In addition, polarized light microscopy (PLM) is used to detect anisotropic smear components.

This study also describes protocols for the extraction of smears from the substrates and the identification of key components using various analytical methods, including Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR), gas chromatography/mass spectroscopy (GC/MS), scanning electron microscopy/electron dispersive X-ray spectrometry (SEM/EDX), capillary electrophoresis, and/or high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC).

Personal Care Products, Sexual Assault, GC/MS