



E65 Testing Unsubmitted Sexual Assault Kits: The National Institute of Justice-Federal Bureau of Investigation (NIJ-FBI) Sexual Assault Kit Partnership Successes and Lessons Learned

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After attending this presentation, attendees will better understand how federal support through the NIJ-FBI Sexual Assault Kit Partnership has assisted in investigations and helped reduce the number of Sexual Assault Kits (SAKs) awaiting testing in the nation's law enforcement agencies.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by conveying information the Partnership has garnered with regard to the collection, processing, and testing of SAK evidence from law enforcement agencies across the country.

NIJ, the research, development, and evaluation agency of the United States Department of Justice, leads the nation in supporting the forensic sciences through research and by providing state and local crime labs with funding to help process and test evidence more efficiently. This presentation will provide information on the NIJ-FBI Sexual Assault Kit Partnership initiative designed to help inform evidence collection, processing practices, and testing protocols for SAKs. This Partnership began accepting SAKs from law enforcement agencies in September 2015 and has been helping to address a major need in the nation's forensic science and criminal justice communities: to support state and local law enforcement agencies in their efforts to reduce the number of unsubmitted SAKs. The effort has yielded valuable knowledge related to the processes associated with the intake of sexual assault evidence into the lab, as well as screening, testing, and analysis specific to the processing of large quantities of unsubmitted SAKs. For instance, knowledge gained from this initiative has contributed to the *National Best Practices for Sexual Assault Kits: A Multidisciplinary Approach* report developed in response to the Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Reporting (SAFER) Act of 2013, which focuses on the accurate, timely, and effective collection and processing of DNA evidence in sexual assault investigations.¹ This initiative has supported the goal of carrying out analyses of samples from untested unsubmitted SAKs so DNA profiles can be developed and placed in the National DNA Index System (NDIS), considered one part of the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), the FBI's program of support for criminal justice DNA databases and the software used to run these databases. The Partnership has generated hundreds of CODIS hits throughout the nation, and the upload of hundreds of eligible profiles generated from DNA analysis as a result of this research has provided direct aid in the investigation and apprehension of sexual assault perpetrators.

Reference(s):

- ¹ National Institute of Justice. *National Best Practices for Sexual Assault Kits: A Multidisciplinary Approach*. August 8, 2017, from NIJ.gov: <https://nij.gov/topics/law-enforcement/investigations/sexual-assault/Pages/national-best-practices-for-sexual-assault-kits.aspx>.

Sexual Assault, Sexual Assault Kit, Unsubmitted Sexual Assault Kit