



E81 Tracking Trends Through the Peer Review Process

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Learning Overview: After attending this presentation, attendees will have an understanding of the unique application of the peer review process at the United States Army Criminal Investigation Laboratory (USACIL) through a simultaneous technical and administrative review of the case file and report. Attendees will also receive insight on why this new approach was needed and how it was developed. Attendees will be provided an understanding of how issues and errors detected in the peer review process can be monitored for trends and will be provided a summary of some of the trends noted during an evaluation of data gathered during calendar year 2018.

Impact on the Forensic Science Community: This presentation will impact the forensic science community by exploring a new peer review approach in practice in Latent Print and Footwear/Tire Track-related requests by the USACIL and how the peer review process is being utilized to track trends in the application of procedures and the mitigation of errors.

In addition to the traditional elements of administrative and technical review, the new peer review approach utilizes a specially designed checklist to rank errors detected in casework. This ranking system provides valuable insight into the critical nature of the errors and to better understand the potential impact of the error to reported results if it had not been detected. The review is categorized into several key components to better track where in the examination process issues routinely occur. The data gathered through the checklist is evaluated to look for positive and negative trends in the application of procedures or errors made in an attempt to improve case quality output and enhance the review process as a whole. Tracking of these trends allows managers and policy makers to adjust policy and resources with data to support the changes and to potentially evaluate how to prevent further review findings. This process also allows reviewers to provide suggestions, which may not be explicitly required per policy, but provides better overall collaboration between case examiner and reviewer to develop a more coherent work product. Results from an evaluation of data from 2018 will be discussed, which highlight the typical errors made and the impact of these errors to the case.

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Peer Review, Trends, Latent Prints