



Forensic DNA Identification

Author(s)

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Description

This problem was given to students as part of a [course on problem based learning \(PBL\) using fractious problems](#). It asked them to consider the use of extensive DNA databases for forensic identification. Students were asked to apply six skills in analyzing and devising policy resolutions for the problems and to apply PBL skills in doing so.

Body

As genomic technologies improve, there has been increased demand for the collection, storage, and use of DNA samples. DNA samples have been collected for a number of purposes, both by government agencies and private entities, including to identify rare but harmful genetic conditions in newborns, for research purposes, and to exculpate or exonerate persons who are currently suspected of committing crimes or who have been convicted of committing crimes previously.

In addition, both the federal and state governments have authorized the collection of DNA samples from persons who have been arrested or convicted of certain crimes for the purpose of creating DNA databases that can be used to help identify persons who commit future crimes. Some have argued that these DNA databases should be expanded in various ways, perhaps even to include information from DNA samples taken from everyone who is born in or who enters the U.S. There are many unsolved

crimes and these databases might help bring more perpetrators to justice for their crimes as well as prevent future crimes. These expanded databases might be used for other important purposes as well, such as identifying missing persons, fatalities from natural disasters, or victims of terrorist attacks. Others have expressed concerns about constitutional, ethical, policy, scientific, and technological issues associated with current and potential practices in creating and using DNA databases for forensic identification.

Prepare findings, analysis, and recommendations regarding current State of Georgia and federal practices regarding the creation and use of DNA databases for forensic identification and whether these current practices should be restricted or expanded or otherwise revised.

Notes

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Resource Type

Case Study / Scenario

Parent Collection

Problem Based Learning (PBL) Fractious Problem Case Assignments

Topics

Governance

Privacy and Surveillance

Public Well-being

Discipline(s)

Criminology and Criminal Justice

Genetics and Genomics

Life and Environmental Sciences

Research Ethics

Social and Behavioral Sciences