

FAMILIAL DATABASE SEARCHING – A NEW ZEALAND CASE STUDY

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Familial searching aims to provide DNA intelligence to investigations in which a DNA profile has been obtained from a crime sample but where there is no match to an individual when compared with the National DNA Database. Familial searching is based on the way in which DNA is inherited within a particular family group. DNA profiles from related individuals are more likely to contain similarities in their DNA than two unrelated individuals.

The Forensic Science Service first used this technique in 2002 to help solve an historic case involving the rape and murder of three girls in South Wales. More recently, in the UK, they have obtained their first successful prosecution after using the technique to help solve a homicide in Surrey.

This poster discusses the use of this technique in the investigation of two unsolved sexual assaults in New Zealand linked by DNA. It also deals with the ethical and legal issues surrounding familial searching and specific problems relating to its use in New Zealand relating to the New Zealand way of life.