

ABOUT THE FORENSIC GENETICS POLICY INITIATIVE

The Forensic Genetics Policy Initiative (FGPI), a collaboration of GeneWatch UK, Privacy International and the Council for Responsible Genetics, was founded in 2010 to address the imbalance between the legitimate needs of law enforcement and individual rights with regards to DNA collection and use.

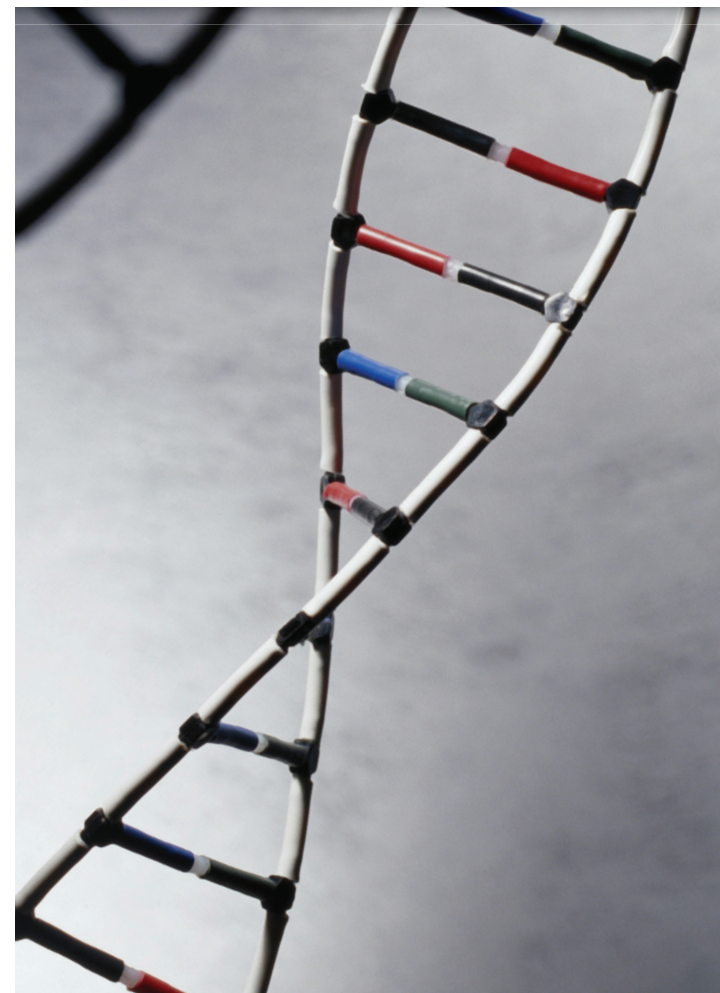
At the same time that there has been rapid growth of forensic DNA databases worldwide, there has been limited public discourse on the privacy and human rights concerns they raise; and domestic and international efforts to create standards reflecting such concerns have been piecemeal.

FGPI seeks to achieve a direct impact on the human rights standards adopted for DNA databases across the world. We aim to build global civil society's capacities to engage in policy-making processes on the development of national and international DNA databases and cross-border sharing of forensic information and to protect human rights by setting international standards for DNA databases.

HOW FGPI CAN HELP YOU:

- Provide education services, including public speaking and materials covering evidence and data on the implications of DNA databases and political background
- Provide information on what's happening in countries around the world
- Provide legal evaluation and legislative review
- Provide organizing and strategy consultations

We are available to answer any of your questions, provide strategic advice or to work in partnership as appropriate. Please visit us at: **www.dnapolicyinitiative.org**



DNA COLLECTION AND DNA DATABASES

Today, 62 countries worldwide are operating forensic DNA databases and at least 34 countries plan to set up new DNA databases.

DNA databases worldwide can bring benefits to society by helping to solve crimes and assisting in the enforcement of the rule of law. But the alarming rate of creation and expansion of such databases, with little public input and discussion, has raised serious privacy and human rights concerns. In some countries, DNA is being collected routinely from people on arrest, even when it has no relevance to the crime being investigated, and DNA profiles and samples have been stored indefinitely from large numbers of innocent people. Other countries lack basic quality assurance for laboratories or a reliable system to track DNA evidence from the crime scene to the court and prevent miscarriages of justice.

DNA profiling is different from other methods of identification such as fingerprints. It can identify individuals and also their entire family. Stored DNA samples can provide a window into an individual's medical history if they are further analysed.

Moreover, evidence shows that when it comes to DNA databases, bigger just isn't better. As the UK database, for example, ballooned in size there was no statistical increase in the number of crimes detected using DNA, because most people are unlikely to commit serious crimes for which DNA evidence might be relevant.

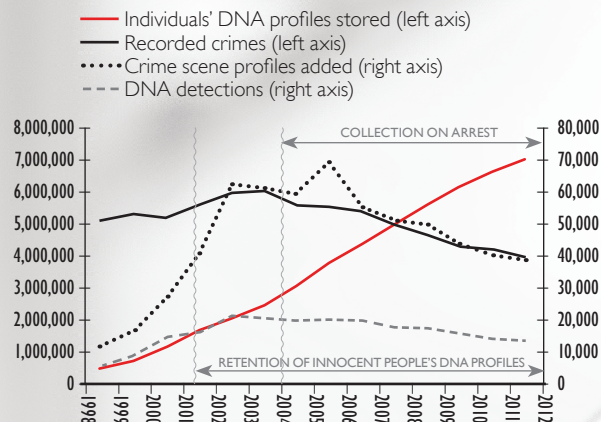


Figure 1: Crimes detected involving a DNA match (direct detections), recorded crimes, individuals' DNA profiles stored on the UK National DNA Database (NDNAD) and crime scene DNA profiles added per year from 1st April 1998 to 31st March 2012. Data sources: DNA detection data from NDNAD annual reports since 2002/03.

STORIES OF HARM

CHILDREN:

More than 100,000 innocent children ended up with records on the UK National DNA Database, before the law was changed to require removal of these records including:

- A 10 year old girl arrested when she was bullied at school
- A 12 year old boy accused of stealing his friend's Pokémon cards
- A 14 year old arrested for jokingly ping pong her schoolmate's bra
- A 13 year old girl who threw a snowball at a police car

A former police officer alleged that the police had been deliberately arresting innocent young people just to get their DNA.

ADULTS:

DNA is being collected for an ever expanding list of offenses:

- A grandmother arrested for "stealing" a football that was kicked into her garden
- An 18-year-old who handed a lost phone into police and was then accused of stealing it
- A man listening to an MP3 player who was arrested after a woman thought it was a gun
- A computer expert wrongly accused of being a terrorist
- A woman speaking out at a war protest even though she was never charged with a crime

Some databases, such as New York's, contain DNA collected for minor crimes such as speeding and loitering.

DNA ERRORS:

An over reliance on DNA evidence and expanded collection practices have increased rates of cross-contamination of samples, mislabeling, misinterpretation of samples and in some cases outright fraud.

- Josiah Sutton was sentenced to 25 years in prison for rape because of a lab mix up
- Peter Hamkin was held by police for 20 days based on an Interpol error
- Steven Myer spent seven months in jail for burglary based on a lab error
- The New York City Medical Examiner's office was caught faking DNA test results

CONTACT INFO AND FGPI SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS

FORENSIC GENETICS POLICY INITIATIVE

Setting Human Rights Standards For DNA Databases Worldwide

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