

Panel Discussion:

Law Enforcement Genealogical Searching: A Legitimate Crime Solving Tool or An Unauthorized Intrusion into a Family's Genetic Privacy?

“Genealogical Searching” in online ancestry DNA databases is the latest genetic investigative tool harnessed by law enforcement to solve violent crimes, and the technique could be used routinely to protect society by identifying perpetrators through their relative’s genetic DNA data. Unlike the national law enforcement DNA database that is governed by federal law, regulations and procedures, law enforcement’s use of DNA databases containing voluntarily submitted genetic data for personal ancestry searches has resulted in concerns that entire families could come under suspicion. The public access genealogy or ancestry DNA databases used are not subject to the same access and use regulation as national and state law enforcement DNA databases.

What protections are available for these online ancestry DNA databases? Do family members have a right to genetic privacy or a right to protect their genetic data? These and other issues are raised in the Los Angeles Times article *False starts in search for Golden State Killer reveal the pitfalls of DNA testing*, (B. Oreskes, J. Serna and R. Winton, 05/04/2018). A panel of legal and genetic privacy experts will discuss privacy, legal and policy implications concerning the use of open source genealogical sites by law enforcement for public safety purposes.