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DNA TRANSFER: ASPECTS RELEVANT TO FORENSIC INVESTIGATIONS

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It is becoming increasingly relevant to have a good understanding of DNA transfer, persistence, prevalence and recovery (DNA-TPPR) to assist those requested to provide expert opinion on DNA-related activity-level issues. Understanding the factors influencing DNA-TPPR will also assist in the targeting of samples for collection to provide profiles that will aid forensic investigations, as well as in the application of appropriate contamination minimisation practices that will help protect the integrity of the collected samples and generated profiles.

Several factors can impact DNA-TPPR. Some of these will be explored here.

Whilst much has been learnt about DNA-TPPR over the past decade or two, a greater investment is required to improve our understanding of some of the factors influencing DNA-TPPR and to generate DNA-TPPR related data that can be readily accessed and utilised by forensic experts. Improvements in additional aspects, such as: the use of appropriate terminology, recognition of the expertise required to perform activity level assessments, and the training and proficiency testing of those assisting forensic investigations and legal deliberations in relation to the transfer of DNA, will aid the ability of forensic experts to provide good quality opinion and guidance to the triers of fact.

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