

OSAC RESEARCH NEEDS ASSESSMENT FORM



Title of research need: Understanding cognitive bias in DVI operations

Keyword(s): Disaster victim identification, mass fatality, cognitive bias

Submitting subcommittee(s): MDI **Date Approved:** 6/30/2025

Background Information:

1. Does this research need address a gap(s) in a current or planned standard? (ex.: Field identification system for on scene opioid detection and confirmation)

No.

2. Are you aware of any ongoing research that may address this research need that has not yet been published (e.g., research presented in conference proceedings, studies that you or a colleague have participated in but have yet to be published)?

No.

3. Key bibliographic references relating to this research need: (ex.: Toll, L., Standifer, K. M., Massotte, D., eds. (2019). Current Topics in Opioid Research. Lausanne: Frontiers Media SA. doi: 10.3389/978-2-88963-180-3)

None.

4. Review the annual operational/research needs published by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) at <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/forensic-science-research-and-development-technology-working-group-operational#latest>? Is your research need identified by NIJ?

No.

5. In what ways would the research results improve current laboratory capabilities?

Understanding the presence (and extent) of cognitive bias and its potential impact on postmortem processing of human remains and victim identification is essential for developing strategies to mitigate any negative impact of bias. There is a lack of understanding of the degree of cognitive bias that may be associated with high throughput disaster victim identification operations. There are two closely associated research needs:

- Determine if cognitive bias exists in current DVI operations
- Develop effective mitigation strategies

6. In what ways would the research results improve understanding of the scientific basis for the subcommittee(s)?

The subcommittee will benefit from this research by enhancing the DVI community's understanding of the role and extent of cognitive bias in DVI operations. With these research results, the subcommittee can develop standards and best practices to support medicolegal jurisdictions in their attempts to reduce the introduction and limit the effects of cognitive bias in DVI management.

7. In what ways would the research results improve services to the criminal justice system?

Implement additional protective and quality assurance measures to reduce or eliminate cognitive bias in disaster victim identification.

8. Status assessment (I, II, III, or IV):

I		Major gap in current knowledge	Minor gap in current knowledge
No or limited current research is being conducted	I	III	
Existing current research is being conducted	II	IV	

This research need has been identified by one or more subcommittees of OSAC and is being provided as an informational resource to the community.