Title of research need: Customer Understanding of Trace Evidence Reports

Keyword(s): conclusions, customers, interpretation, reporting

Submitting subcommittee(s): Trace Materials  Date Approved: 02/24/2021

(If SAC review identifies additional subcommittees, add them to the box above.)

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)

   Yes. While we have begun addressing the ability of subject matter experts to use our interpretation and reporting conclusions document effectively, we do not know how well the various readers of the report understand and apply them.

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.


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?

Indirectly, this research need is related to these gaps/needs identified in the impression/trace evidence section:

- Scientific foundations for expert conclusions of forensic evidence
- Development and validation of standardized forensic methods and conclusions
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of varied types of review and/or verification of casework, testimony, and investigative leads

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

We would be more aware of whether our reports are correctly understood by our customers, including law enforcement officers, attorneys, and suspects/defendants. The results of research could potentially provide recommendations on report language that is scientifically accurate and understandable by our non-scientist customers.

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

We would be more aware of whether our reports are correctly understood by our customers. We could adjust our approach to ensure improved understanding.
7. In what ways would the research results improve services to the criminal justice system?

We would be more aware of whether our reports are correctly understood by our customers. We could adjust our approach to ensure improved understanding.

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

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Major gap in current knowledge</th>
<th>Minor gap in current knowledge</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>No or limited</strong> current research is being conducted</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>III</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Existing</strong> current research is being conducted</td>
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This research need has been identified by one or more subcommittees of OSAC and is being provided as an informational resource to the community.