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Novel concepts for the application of rapid DNA technology as a sentinel event prophylactic in the criminal justice system

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Rapid DNA Technology (RDT) may hold the key to the elimination of a significant number of sentinel events. Sentinel Events (SE) in the criminal justice system may best be explained through the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations' (JACHO) definition as "an unexpected occurrence involving death or severe physical or psychological injury, or the risk thereof". The most notable SE in the criminal justice system today is a wrongful conviction - which exposes all attendant parties to significant personal and institutional liabilities. The International Association of Chiefs of Police/U.S. Department of Justice released its August report on the Wrongful Convictions Summit. In the report, there were thirty recommendations to reduce sentinel events in the criminal justice system. Sentinel events are likely the result of compound errors. The recommendations of the Summit Advisory Group focused on preventing the compounding of errors (racial profiling, investigative biases, aggressive interviewing, faulty lineup protocols, false testimony and eyewitness errors) to which Doyle refers. Currently, the public safety community seems to be virtually silent on the use of RDT as a sentinel event prophylactic in fulfilling the criminal justice system's goal to protect the blameless while holding the blameworthy accountable. The injection of RDT at the earliest opportunity in the pre-charging phase of the criminal process may provide relief from the seemingly endless rise of sentinel events in the criminal justice system.

Biography

George W Adams is the National Director of Operations for the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs), and holds a Master of Arts from the University of Texas at Arlington in Criminology and Criminal Justice. He is an Associate Member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police with an Advanced Peace Officers Certification from the Texas Commission of Law Enforcement Standards and Education. He served on the NamUs Missing Persons Advisory group, and co-authored the first successful National Institute of Justice NamUs Operational Competitive Agreement and two successful annual extensions for a total of \$7.55 million.

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