

The author(s) shown below used Federal funds provided by the U.S. Department of Justice and prepared the following final report:

Document Title: Unsubmitted Sexual Assault Kits in Houston, TX: Case Characteristics, Forensic Testing Results, and the Investigation of CODIS Hits, Final Report

Author(s): William Wells, Ph.D., Bradley Campbell, Ph.D., Cortney Franklin, Ph.D.

Document No.: 249812

Date Received: April 2016

Award Number: 2011-DN-BX-0002

This report has not been published by the U.S. Department of Justice. To provide better customer service, NCJRS has made this federally funded grant report available electronically.

Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

require collaboration among multiple agencies. One primary reaction by agencies has been to identify untested SAKs in storage and then begin the process of testing them. Indeed, 52 jurisdictions were awarded over \$80 million in 2015 to address the problem of untested SAKs, primarily through evidence testing (Bureau of Justice Assistance, n.d.). Testing older SAKs can serve many purposes, but one important objective is to advance criminal investigations and hold sex offenders accountable.

Sexual assault kit testing can help advance older, unresolved cases by identifying perpetrators and by helping to build stronger cases against known suspects. Offenders who are not known at the time of the initial investigation can be identified through the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS). CODIS stores the DNA profiles of offenders. DNA profiles that are foreign to victims and developed by testing evidence in SAKs can be entered into CODIS. When a profile developed from evidence testing matches a profile in the system, this provides criminal investigators with additional evidence and possibly new leads.

Through CODIS, DNA evidence has the potential to positively impact criminal investigations, but systematic evidence about case outcomes in CODIS hit cases, and the role CODIS hits play, has been lacking. The numbers of CODIS hits are occasionally discussed in media reports, but detailed information about the outcomes of CODIS hit cases is rarely provided. The implication is that a CODIS hit represents a successful police investigation outcome, but conversations with some police practitioners have revealed that a CODIS hit is just the beginning of cold-case investigations and other case variables remain important to the investigation process (see Menaker, Campbell, & Wells, in press).

Direct research evidence about CODIS effectiveness comes from an analysis of over 700 criminal cases in San Francisco (Gabriel et al., 2010), which resulted in 198 CODIS hits,

