ASCLD FRC Lightning Talks
Forensic DNA Phenotyping
Thursday November 18th, 2021, 1:00 EST, WebEx
Register at: https://www.ascld.org/forensic-research-committee/

The VISAGE Molecular Tools for Forensic DNA Phenotyping

Walther Parson, Associate Professor, University of Innsbruck, Austria

In the framework of the European Union funded research project VISAGE (Visual Attributes Through Genomics; https://www.visage-h2020.eu) molecular tools were developed to construct composite sketches of unknown perpetrators from crime scene DNA. These tools use Massively Parallel Sequencing technology to predict appearance, biogeographical ancestry and age from diverse forensically relevant tissues and have been validated in international collaborative exercises.

Following Forensic DNA Phenotyping from Research to Investigation

Roos Hopman, PostDoc, Leibniz Institute for Research on Evolution and Biodiversity, Germany

Technologies used to predict physical characteristics from DNA are developed in research laboratories but are not meant to stay there: results are ultimately aimed at furthering criminal investigations. In this talk I highlight the frictions that arise as these technologies move from development in the research lab, to application to crime scene samples in the forensic lab, and finally to guiding a criminal investigation.

Ethical Issues of Forensic DNA Phenotyping

Rafaela Granja, Researcher, Universidade do Minho, Portugal

Forensic DNA Phenotyping (FDP) has been framed by on-going controversies about the reliability and validity of FDP, which come together with debates about the ethical challenges emerging from the use of this technology in the criminal justice system. In this talk, I briefly address some of them, such as FDP investigative rather than evidentiary value, the management of overly enthusiastic expectations, as well as its discriminatory potential.