

How well do you know your family? – investigating crimes through relatives

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Abstract

Investigative genetic genealogy (IGG) has emerged as a powerful forensic tool to generate crucial leads to identify unknown perpetrators and to identify unknown human remains. IGG includes the use of large genotype data sets (hundreds of thousands of DNA markers), in combination with large public genealogy DNA databases to track biological relatives of an unknown DNA donor. IGG has been applied in two forensic cases in Sweden, one case involving unidentified human remains and another case involving DNA from a double murder cold case. In this presentation, I will describe the process of IGG and discuss our experiences from the two cases, including technical, legal and ethical aspects.

About the speaker

Andreas Tillmar, PhD, is a forensic geneticist at the National Board of Forensic Medicine, Sweden and a senior lecturer and associate professor of Forensic Genetics at Linköping University, Sweden. He has worked for more than 15 years in the field, signing more than 20,000 reports on DNA-based paternity, kinship and missing person investigations. His current tasks include technical leadership and R&D. His research is focused on topics such as the application of new genetic polymorphisms for complex kinship testing, applied biostatistics, population genetics and, most recently, investigative genetic genealogy. He played a large part in clearing up a 16-year-old double murder case with the use of investigative genetic genealogy. He is the main author, senior author or co-author of more than 45 peer-reviewed articles and he is chair of the English-speaking Working Group (ESWG) of the International Society for Forensic Genetics (ISFG).