

DNA Recommendations – Statement by the DNA Commission of the International Society for Forensic Haemogenetics concerning the National Academy of Sciences Report on DNA Technology in Forensic Science in the USA

During 1992 the National Research Council of America's National Academy of Sciences published its long awaited report on "*DNA Technology in Forensic Science*".

Perhaps not surprisingly the contents of the report stimulated considerable discussion both in and out of the Courts, among scientists as well as lawyers and not only in the USA. The following statement was recently issued by the DNA Commission of the International Society for Forensic Haemogenetics and circulated to all members of their Society:

The DNA Commission of the International Society for Forensic Haemogenetics (ISFH) met in London in January 1993. Of particular concern were the sections of the report of the National Research Council on DNA Technology in Forensic Science relating to (a) certification, accreditation and regulation of laboratories and (b) the application of a ceiling principle when applying the multiplication rule for the estimation of the frequency of occurrence of particular DNA profiles.

1. The Commission agreed that the subject of certification, accreditation and regulation of laboratories was of important concern to the ISFH and therefore the ISFH Board should consider encouraging active participation of the ISFH and its members in the development of any relevant programmes and legislation.
2. The NRC report asserted that databases produced from subgroups from within a major population rather than from general population groups might show large

differences in the estimated frequencies of occurrence of DNA profiles because the differences between subgroups in a race might be greater than between races.

The Commission considered the growing information on the frequencies of occurrence of DNA profiles in various populations and in particular was aware of the evidence presented at "The Use of DNA Statistics in Crime Cases" meeting arranged by the Metropolitan Police Forensic Science Laboratory and held in London on 15th and 16th January 1993.

The Commission agreed that there was mounting evidence that the differences in allele frequencies do not have significant effects, forensically, on DNA profile frequency estimates when one compares subgroups of individuals from within a major population. The greatest differences in such estimates appear from comparisons made between major racial groups not within such groups.

Such findings do not provide evidence indicating a necessity to include a ceiling principle approach in the procedures which are currently in use.

The DNA Commission consisted of the Executive Committee of the International Society for Forensic Haemogenetics (W. Bär, B. Brinkmann, P. Lincoln, W. Mayr, U. Rossi) and co-opted experts (B. Budowle, R. Fournier, P. Gill, S. Rand).

London, February 1993