



Department of Justice



Office of Justice Programs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 2, 2015

Office of Justice Programs (OJP)
(202) 307-0703
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Fingerprint Examiners Found to Have Very Low Error Rates

WASHINGTON - A large-scale study of the accuracy and reliability of decisions made by latent fingerprint examiners found that examiners make extremely few errors. Even when examiners did not get an independent second opinion about the decisions, they were remarkably accurate. But when decisions were verified by an independent reviewer, examiners had a 0% false positive, or incorrect identification, rate and a 3% false negative, or missed identification, rate. The study was released today and funded by the Office of Justice Programs' National Institute of Justice (NIJ).

“The results from the Miami-Dade team address the accuracy, reliability, and validity in the forensic science disciplines, a need that was identified in the 2009 National Academies report, *Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward*.” said Gerald LaPorte, Director of NIJ's Office of Investigative and Forensic Sciences.

The research team, from the Miami-Dade Police Department Forensic Services Bureau Fingerprint Identification Section, tested the accuracy of 109 fingerprint examiners from 76 federal, state and local law enforcement agencies from across the United States. Examiners were presented with a variety of comparison challenges with varying degrees of difficulty. The study also measured how often individual examiners repeated their own decisions and how often different examiners came to the same conclusion.

TITLE: *Miami-Dade Research Study for the Reliability of the ACE-V Process: Accuracy & Precision in Latent Fingerprint Examinations.*

AUTHORS: Miami-Dade Police Department Forensic Services Bureau, Fingerprint Identification Section

WHERE: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/248534.pdf>

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