# Article information:

Evidentiary Discrepancies in Sexual Assault Casework within the US | Forensic Sciences Research | Oxford Academic
<https://academic.oup.com/fsr/article/6/3/189/6802646>

# Article summary:

1. A significant number of unsubmitted sexual assault kits (SAKs) in the US contain biological specimens designated for toxicological analysis, which is crucial for accurate measurements in drug-facilitated sexual assaults.

2. The variation in SAK submission policies throughout the US can potentially lead to degradation of toxicological evidence due to time-delayed collection and poorly maintained storage temperatures.

3. Modernization of facilities, electronic tracking of unsubmitted SAKs, mandated transfer of biological evidence within 72 hours, and documentation of temperature within the chain of custody or other records can address these delays and improve the interpretation of toxicological analyses in sexual assault investigations.

# Article rating:

Appears strongly imbalanced: The article is written in a biased or one-sided way, and the information it provides is not trustworthy enough to be considered a reliable source. You should consult other sources to find reliable information on the presented issues.

# Article analysis:

The article titled "Evidentiary Discrepancies in Sexual Assault Casework within the US" discusses the potential issues and discrepancies in the handling and storage of sexual assault evidence, specifically focusing on toxicological analysis. While the topic is important and relevant, there are several areas where the article lacks critical analysis and presents biased information.

One potential bias in the article is its focus on law enforcement officer (LEO) rationale for unsubmitted sexual assault kits (SAKs) without examining other factors that may contribute to the backlog of untested kits. The article suggests that LEOs may have subjective reasons for not submitting evidence, such as questioning the credibility of survivors or deeming cases unworthy of pursuit. While this may be true in some cases, it fails to acknowledge other systemic issues that contribute to the backlog, such as lack of resources, inadequate training, and institutional biases.

Additionally, the article presents unsupported claims regarding the impact of submission delays on toxicological evidence. It states that delays in submitting SAKs can result in degradation of biological specimens and potentially lead to erroneous interpretations of toxicological analyses. However, it does not provide any evidence or studies to support these claims. Without empirical data or research findings, these claims remain speculative.

Furthermore, the article overlooks potential counterarguments or alternative perspectives on the issue. For example, it does not explore possible reasons why forensic laboratories may be unable to accommodate long-term storage of evidence or why LEOs may question survivor credibility. By presenting only one side of the argument, the article fails to provide a comprehensive analysis of the issue.

The article also lacks a balanced presentation of information by focusing solely on potential risks and shortcomings in current practices without discussing any potential benefits or successes. While it is important to address concerns and identify areas for improvement, a more balanced approach would provide a more nuanced understanding of the complexities involved in sexual assault casework.

In terms of missing evidence, the article does not provide any data or statistics on the actual impact of submission delays on toxicological analyses. It mentions surveys that identified unsubmitted SAKs but does not provide any information on the percentage of cases where evidence degradation occurred or the extent to which it affected toxicological results. Without this data, it is difficult to assess the magnitude of the problem and its implications.

Overall, while the article raises important issues regarding evidentiary discrepancies in sexual assault casework, it lacks critical analysis, presents biased information, and fails to provide sufficient evidence for its claims. A more balanced and comprehensive approach would strengthen the article's arguments and contribute to a more informed discussion on improving sexual assault investigations.

# Topics for further research:

* Factors contributing to the backlog of untested sexual assault kits in the US
* Resources and training challenges faced by forensic laboratories in handling and storing evidence
* Institutional biases and their impact on sexual assault investigations
* Studies on the degradation of biological specimens in delayed sexual assault kit submissions
* Reasons why law enforcement officers may question survivor credibility in sexual assault cases
* Benefits and successes of current practices in sexual assault casework

# Report location:

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