

Study: DNA may predict criminals' surnames

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British researchers say forensic scientists might soon be using DNA from crime scenes to predict the surname of the criminal responsible for the crime.

While not a perfect science, the use of DNA to identify a criminal's name might become an important investigative tool, the BBC reported Wednesday.

The method utilizes genetic similarities in the Y chromosomes of men with the same surname, with the similarities passed from father to son.

The co-author of the study, Mark Jobling of the University of Leicester, told the BBC such evidence would give investigators a tool to prioritize a sub-set of suspects and perhaps reduce the police workload.

"You might have a situation where the Y chromosome predicts 25 names. So you could go and see in the pool of suspects whether the names are there," Jobling said. "If they are ... you could then ask them for a DNA sample and do conventional DNA profiling to see if they match the crime scene sample."

Details of the research appear in the latest edition of the journal *Current Biology*.

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