

Detection and identification of drugs – The challenges of meeting scientific and legislative standards

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Scientific evidence plays a key role in modern day courtrooms. Exhibits from crime scenes are collected and analyzed by the experts of the Division of Identification and Forensic Science (DIFS) of the Israeli Police. Reports given by experts from the DIFS are usually a product of a laborious and meticulous process. The analysis must meet scientific standards as well as judicial requirements. In recent years there has been a growing demand for higher QA standards in all aspects of forensic operations. In fact, the DIFS has undergone strict and thorough examinations by the Israeli Laboratory Accreditation Authority and received accreditation according to ISO 17025. As part of the DIFS, the National Drug Laboratory deals with analyzing and identifying exhibits that are suspected of containing illicit drugs. The identification is based on at least two independent matching scientific results. In accordance with the Israeli dangerous drugs ordinance, the results of exhibit examinations are based on qualitative analyses. However, there are a number of challenges in the conformity assessment process required to meet legislative, accreditation and scientific standards. In this lecture I will outline the main issues that we deal with in order to generate fast and reliable expert opinions.