Detective Dialogue: Effective Use of Evidence – CRC/FSC/CSI

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Function of legal system dependent on adequate forensic support

- Laboratory analysis of evidentiary material by SAPS forensic labs
- Laboratory analysis of toxicology by health chemical labs
Value of forensic samples dependent on its provenance:

- Collection
- Preservation
- Care of evidence
- Chain of custody
In many cases forensic evidence is:

- Compromised – Yengeni matter
- Lost – Meeuwese case
- Bungled – Van der Vyver criminal trial
New forensics lab in Cape Town only addresses part of the problem:

- Morale depletion caused by inequitable staffing policies
- Labs not accredited
- Senior staff found guilty of criminal offenses
- Under-qualification of laboratory staff
Other problems not addressed:

- Disappearance of evidence
e.g.: cocaine from Pretoria forensic lab

- Failure to train ground staff correctly in elementary crime procedure
e.g.: Drummond matter
Health Chemical Labs:

- 5 year waiting period for results means court system does not function properly –
  - no finalisation of post mortem reports
  - insurance matters delayed
  - estates cannot be wound up
Health Chemical Labs:

- Quality of analysts from personal experience leaves much to be desire
- Under qualification and training
- Inappropriate staffing guidelines lead to dissatisfaction and attrition of competent staff
Overall Impression of Labs:

- Results easily negated by legal teams
- Bad local perception has led to the use of breathalyser for prosecution due to poor service from blood alcohol labs with disastrous results