

The Evidentiary Value of DNA

Justice Renato C. Corona

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The introduction and use of DNA technology as evidence is a recent development in the Philippines. This Article sheds light on the use of DNA technology to give those in the legal profession a better understanding of its application in the Philippine setting.

First, DNA evidence is presented in court through expert testimony. The witness must be properly qualified as an expert. Second, the DNA evidence must pass the tests of admissibility. Third, there are several recognized DNA testing methods. This includes Polymerase Chain Reaction and Short Tandem Repeat.

The Article also discusses how DNA evidence has been utilized in Philippine jurisprudence. First, DNA evidence is used in criminal cases to prove the guilt of the accused, such as in *People v. Vallejo*, where the accused was found guilty of rape with homicide through DNA evidence. Two other significant cases are *People v. Yatar* and *In re: The Writ of Habeas Corpus for Reynaldo de Villa*. Second, DNA evidence is also used in cases to prove paternity and filiation, in such cases as *Pe Lim v. Court of Appeals* and *Cabitania v. Court of Appeals*. Two notable cases involving the use of DNA evidence are *Agustin v. Court of Appeals* and *Herrera v. Alba*.

The Article also examines the probative value and weight of DNA Evidence. The Supreme Court in *People v. Vallejo* provided some principles to consider in assessing the probative value of DNA: (1) how the samples were collected; (2) how they were handled; (3) the possibility of contamination; (4) the procedure followed in analyzing the samples; (5) whether the proper standards and procedures were followed; and (6) the qualification of the analyst who conducted the tests.

The Author concludes that DNA testing is a valid probative tool in the Philippines. Its high level of accuracy is highly useful. Promoting its use not only protects the rights of the people, it also results in the improvement of the administration of justice.