

Snake species responsible for bite identified using DNA test

To treat victims of snakebites, it's important to know which type of snake did the biting. Now, a new test looks at the tiny bits of snake DNA that are left in the fang marks on victims, to identify the species, a new study shows.

In the study, researchers collected 194 DNA samples from the bite sites on snakebite victims in Nepal. In 21 cases, the patients actually brought the dead [snake that had bitten](#) them to the treatment center, and the researchers were able to verify the source of the bite. In all of those cases, the results of the DNA test agreed with the dead-snake species identification conducted by independent experts.

"You need to know the species that bit your patient [in order to treat them]," said study co-author Ulrich Kuch, of the Department of Tropical Medicine and Public Health at the Goethe University Institute of Occupational, Social and Environmental Medicine in Germany, and the developer of the snake DNA identification test.

"Now, with the DNA-based test, we can substantially increase the number of patients for whom we can identify the [snake species \[responsible for the bite\]](#)," Kuch told Live Science.

Right now, the DNA test is too complex and time-consuming to be performed for every snakebite victim, said study co-author Francois Chappuis, chief of the division of tropical and humanitarian medicine at Geneva University Hospitals in Switzerland.

Read full, original article: [DNA Test Links Snakebites to Species](#)