

'Terrible science': Archaeological geneticists blast study that used DNA to identify Jack the Ripper

News media was buzzing [March 18] with a claim that scientists had finally figured out the real identity of the notorious 19th-century serial killer Jack the Ripper thanks to DNA and an old shawl. The only problem? Archaeological geneticists say the research is neither new nor scientifically accurate.

Writing [March 12] in the [Journal of Forensic Sciences](#), Jari Louhelainen of Liverpool John Moores University and David Miller of the University of Leeds published an analysis of "forensic stains" on a silk shawl purportedly linked to a woman named Catherine Eddowes, murdered by Jack the Ripper more than 130 years ago.

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While Louhelainen and Miller suggest in their paper that appropriate chain of custody was employed, and that they attempted to exclude contemporary people's DNA, [geneticist Adam] Rutherford notes that "the way it has been handled since would render DNA analysis cripplingly problematic." This particular silk shawl has made the rounds, with photographs of people holding it with their bare hands. Hardly a pristine object for DNA analysis.

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"This is terrible science and terrible history," [Rutherford declares](#). "It doesn't warrant discussion in the press, let alone in an academic journal."

Read full, original post: [Archaeological Geneticists Call Jack The Ripper DNA Study 'Unpublishable Nonsense'](#)