Department of
Forensic Medicine

Medical faculty, University of Sarajevo

Book of Abstracts

21st International Meeting on Forensic Medicine

Alpe-Adria-Pannonia

Sarajevo, May 30th - June 2nd 2012

HISTORY OF FORENSIC DENTISTRY IN CROATIA

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Historical examples of Hammurabi's Code of Laws from 18th century BC and of identification by teeth of Lollia Paulina in ancient Rome show us that the need for forensic dentistry is as old as civilization. The forensic dental expertise in Croatia has begun in the year 1932, when the two experts witnessed at the court in case where a dentist from Zagreb was accused to have caused the death of his patient by treating pulpitis with an arsenic medicament. Seventies of the 20th century were marked out with several mass disasters. In the train accident in Zagreb in 1974 there were 152 people killed. Police and forensic pathologists performed identification of the victims. A dentist, who was a forensic expert in the field of dentistry but with no former experience in identification procedure, volunteered and took part in the identification. Dental findings, along with other characteristics, proved to be decisive in 5% of 111 identified cases. In the midair collision of a British and a Slovenian airplane near Vrbovec in 1976 there were 176 fatalities, mainly foreign passengers. The identification was conducted by British and German identification teams with the assistance of local police and forensic pathologists. All 63 victims from the British plane were identified and dental features, along with other characteristics, were decisive in 33% of the cases. From the Slovenian plane 103 of 113 victims were identified, 14% exclusively by teeth and 16% by teeth in combination with other characteristics. The next great challenge emerged during and after the 1991-1995 Croatian War of Independence - the need for identification of human remains from mass graves. Identification teams and DNA forensic laboratories have been established in Zagreb, Split and Osijek. For the first time in Croatia, a forensically trained dentist was included in the Zagreb identification team. Out of 1,000 human remains exhumed from mass graves until July 1998, 824 were positively identified. Dental identification was achieved in 25% of the cases and in further 64% dental findings were supportive evidence. In 1996, the Chair of Forensic Dentistry was established as a part of the Department of Dental Anthropology, and Forensic Dentistry was included in the curriculum of the School of Dental Medicine in Zagreb. In 1997, Croatian Society of Forensic Odontology was constituted and became a member of the International Organization of Forensic Odonto-Stomatology (IOFOS).

Keywords:
forensic dentistry; history; identification; disasters; teeth

TEN YEARS AFTER – CHALLENGES OF EXHUMED HUMAN REMAINS IDENTIFICATION ON THE TERRITORY OF KOSOVO AND METOHIA

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After the armed conflicts throughout the nineties of the twentieth century occurred in former Yugoslavia, identification of war victims is a challenging task. This paper gives a detailed description of exhumed remains identification process. One of the study objectives has been a comparison between DNA results and traditional forensic identification methods. This paper deals with the identification of human remains that were exhumed in Kosovo and Metohia in the period 2001-2011, belonging to Serbs and other non-Albanian ethnic communities (Montenegrins, Bosniaks, Roma, Gorani, and others), as well as much lower number of Albanians who were also killed during the war and post-war period. The exhumation and identification of human remains began even during the armed conflict, continued with a high intensity immediately after the establishment of UN administration in the province, and from the end of 2001 among the identified victims dominated those of non-Albanian origin – Serbs, Montenegrins, Roma, and others. The experience of this process and the experience of other countries show that there is a need to organize appropriate services for identification of human remains in Serbia, capable to react effectively in case of mass disaster.

Keywords:
identification, exhumation, human remains, Kosovo and Metohia