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FORENSIC DENTISTRY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB

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ABSTRACT

The Forensic Dentistry in Croatia, according to the written data, started in 1934 when two legal experts were hired to solve a case of a patient that died after dental treatment. Between 1971 and 1991 there were a few mass disasters in Croatia in which the identification of the victims did not include local dentists. An exception was a railroad accident in Zagreb, 1974 when the first dentist was included in the identification process, but without any prior education. The war in Croatia (1991-1995) brought the need for victim identification from mass graves. DVI teams and forensic laboratories were founded in Zagreb, Split and Osijek. Zagreb identification team included an educated forensic dentist from the School of Dental Medicine University of Zagreb. Numerous dental identification cases, naturally, brought the will and the need for further investigation of new techniques, skills and scientific methods. As a result of these, a single-semester course was introduced at the University of Zagreb, with 15 hours of lectures and 15 hours of practical training during the 5th year of Dental Medicine. The Chair for Forensic Dentistry was founded in 1997 at the Department of Dental Anthropology, the same year the undergraduate education started, and in 2000 a university textbook Forensic Dentistry was published. The School of Dental Medicine University of Sarajevo introduces the course, and in the last 12 years our lecturers are frequent guests at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. Apart from the professional help for the colleagues at the Department of Forensic Medicine, the staff develops this area scientifically by presenting their work on international meetings and by publishing their articles in forensic journals, but also through the Croatian Forensic Dental Association. The development of Croatian forensic dentistry has greatly been helped by the cooperation with other forensics from all over the world that has supported our work and has strived to achieve the recognizability of Croatian forensic dentistry in the world. Zagreb School of Dental Medicine is the only school in the Western Balkans that has the Chair for Forensic Dentistry and that actively educates dentists in this field in the undergraduate and postgraduate education, including the continuous education.

KEYWORDS: Forensic Odontology, Education, Croatia.

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