

A Report from the 21st International Meeting on Forensic Medicine Alpe-Adria-Pannonia

30th MAY– 2nd JUNE 2012, SARAJEVO, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

This year's International Meeting on Forensic Medicine Alpe – Adria –Pannonia, the 21st such meeting, was organized by the Department of Forensic Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Sarajevo. The president of the Organizing Committee was Professor Nermin Sarajlić. The main topic of the meeting was Exhumation-Examination-Identification due to the issue of missing persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which arose as a consequence of the war in former Yugoslavia and still presents a great burden for the families and a challenge for the forensic experts.

The meeting was structured into five scientific sessions, a workshop, an International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) symposium, poster presentations and the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) session. There were approximately 170 participants from 19 European countries, USA and Argentina so the symposium presented both a regional and international character.

Scientific sessions, with 83 presentations, covered the main topic of exhumation-examination-identification but also a wide range of other topics in forensic medicine and toxicology. From the field of forensic odontology there were two oral presentations: Age estimation in adults by means of dentin translucency and dental radiographic examination (authors Zukić S, Vuković A, Bajsman A; Bosnia and Herzegovina) and An evaluation of the Haavikko's standards and Cameriere's European formula for dental age estimation in Croatian children (authors Galić I, Vodanović M, Brkić H; Croatia), and two poster presentations: How important is the role of teeth in the world human identification: a transnational case report (authors Pereira CP, Costa JF, de Mendonca MC, Santos JC; Portugal) and History of forensic dentistry in Croatia (authors Dumančić J, Vodanović M, Brkić H; Croatia).

The workshop entitled "Anthropological and forensic-medical examination of exhumed human remains" was lead by Eva Klonowski, forensic anthropologist and a former ICTY, PHR and ICMP expert (Reykjavik, Iceland), and Dr. John Clark, a former ICTY chief Forensic Pathologist (Glasgow, UK), and was attended by 15

participants. Participants were introduced to forensic anthropology with emphasis on team work with other forensic experts. Overview was given to the examination of skeletal remains, determination of gender, determination of age, estimation of stature and determination of ancestry. It is mention worth that dental attrition and Lamendin's technique were among the most commonly used methods of dental age estimation by forensic anthropologists. Within the workshop, participants were given 20 forensic cases, mostly skeletal remains of war camp victims exhumed from war gravesites. Participants answered questions associated with cases and interesting and very educational discussion developed. Previous education, training and experience were of benefit to recognition, differentiation and interpretation of injuries during forensic anthropological examination of skeletal remains.

As the great number of still unidentified human remains stored in facilities in Kosovo (350), Bosnia and Herzegovina (3.000) and Croatia (900) is a regional Western Balkans issue, regional approach was scheduled for the ICRC Symposium. Dr. John Clark gave a presentation on two aims of the forensic pathologists' work – establishing identity of the dead body and proving a crime. Dr. John E. Byrd, forensic anthropologist and director of the JPAC Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii, gave a presentation on policies and procedures for resolving cases of commingled human remains. Oran Finegan, forensic anthropologist at the ICRC, discussed the issue of unidentified human remains in the Western Balkans in order to promote regional discussion and approach on the issue. Luis Fondebrider from the Argentinean Forensic Anthropology Team presented Argentinean experience and inferences on the search and analysis of human remains in cases of political violence. After these lectures, the speakers and regional forensic practitioners held round table discussions.

The ICMP session closed the symposium. In nine presentations, an overview of issues relating to missing persons in Western Balkans was given including DNA procedures, contribution of the archaeological and anthropological forensic science to the identification process, recovery operations, linkages between primary and secondary graves and data management systems.

The organizers ensured a rich social program including a half day sightseeing “War Tour” of Sarajevo and gala dinner with excellent meals and music. This international meeting was an opportunity not only to share experiences but to strengthen wider regional collaboration in different fields of forensic sciences..

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At the venue, from left to right: Marin Vodanović, Anita Bajzman, Amra Vuković, Selma Zukić, Jelena Dumančić and Hrvoje Brkić



At workshop, from left to right: John Clark, Eva Klonowski and several workshop participants