

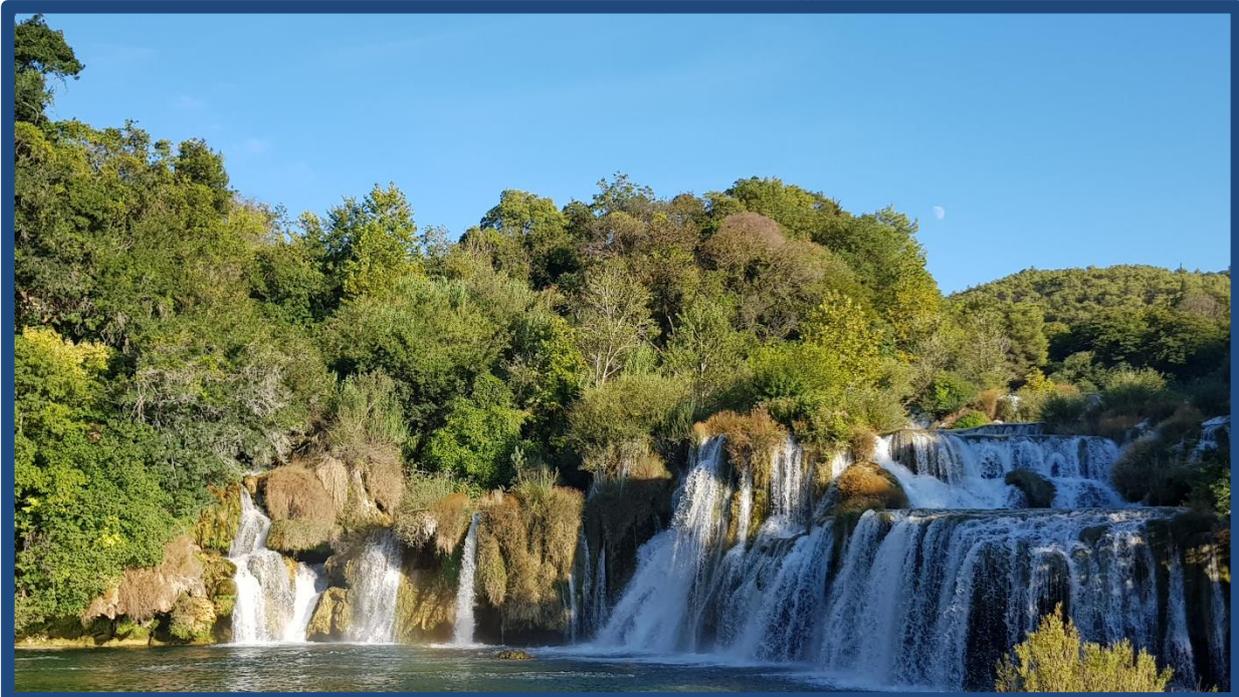


I·O·F·O·S

# NEWSLETTER

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR FORENSIC ODONTO-STOMATOLOGY

[www.iofos.eu](http://www.iofos.eu)



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## IMPRESSUM

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COVER PHOTO: Skradinski buk waterfall on the Krka River, Šibenik, Croatia; Author: Marin Vodanovic

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Dear Readers

The end of 2020 is approaching. It was an unusual year, demanding, full of challenges, and unfortunately sometimes sad because of the problems and circumstances caused by the COVID19 pandemic. All of this may have prompted us to think about the values and little things of everyday life that we did not give importance before, such as drinking coffee or beer with friends.

Circumstances caused by the COVID19 pandemic forced us to learn some new things and change our habits. We became aware of the advantages and disadvantages of working from home. We have no problem to actively participate in online conferences on various platforms, and until less than a year ago we almost didn't even know about them. As always, we managed to adapt to the new way of life and organize our private and business everyday life. In that sense, we have been active and useful to our community for the past six months, as you will be able to read in this issue.

Your contributions for the next issue of IOFOS newsletter should be sent up to May 15th 2021. Your texts should be in Word (max. 2 pages, 1800 characters per page and up to 2 images), accompanied by a portrait photo of the author and affiliation data. More details are available below in the Instructions for authors.



Contributions should be sent

to [vodanovic@sfzg.hr](mailto:vodanovic@sfzg.hr).

Thank you!

I wish you in the year ahead to be healthy and filled with personal satisfaction in private and business life.

Yours

Marin Vodanović

## Instructions for authors

IOFOS newsletter is published biannually in June and December. Contributions should be sent by e-mail to [vodanovic@sfzg.hr](mailto:vodanovic@sfzg.hr) not later than 15 days before the first day of the month of publication. All contributions should be in English as Microsoft Word documents (max. 2 pages). Do not include images in the text. If any, images should be at the end of the text (max. 2 images). All information about forensic dentistry such as meeting reports, news from national societies, forensic activity reports, future forensic meeting announcements, etc. from IOFOS members and member societies, as well as from other contributors are welcome. If you want to be included on IOFOS mailing list and receive the newsletter by e-mail please write to [vodanovic@sfzg.hr](mailto:vodanovic@sfzg.hr). Thank you!

**Hrvoje Brkić**

President of IOFOS

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Dear IOFOS readers and friends,

**W**e are at the very end of this uncertain year which, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, has caused an indelible mark on all human activities around the world. Unfortunately, forensic odontology also records a number of problems associated with the pandemic such as difficulties in clinical work in the morgues, the decline of enthusiasm and other reasons. The work of each of us who promotes and popularizes our profession for most of the year has been mostly individual. It is therefore extremely important that IOFOS, as the main international association, supports and encourages colleagues around the world not to give up.

In the past six months, IOFOS held an online General Assembly on September 11, 2020, which was attended by about twenty representatives of international associations of forensic odontology. The President presented the three-year work and all activities of the executive board. President of the Election Commission prof. Cristiana Palmela Pereira informed us about the

registration and voting procedure and confirmed the new/old president. Along with the president, the entire set of Executive boards was confirmed.

At the beginning of December, more precisely on December 5th, 2020, the first IOFOS e-symposium was held, which was attended by over 500 participants worldwide. It was a big technical challenge for IOFOS Secretary Ricardo Henrique Alves da Silva to



connect and produce all presenters, moderators and organizers via YouTube followers. During the e-symposium, a textbook promotion was held: Forensic Odonto-Stomatology

by IOFOS. The textbook was presented by the editor, reviewer and publisher and a special sale with 40% lower price was announced. You can read more about all of the above in this issue of the newsletter.

At the end of this editorial, I wish you pleasant seasons holidays and a healthy, peaceful and prosperous 2021!

Hrvoje Brkić

**Hrvoje Brkić**

President of IOFOS

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# IOFOS General Assembly and new Executive Board elected

**A**s widely shared on IOFOS website and social media, due to the pandemic, the Triannual Conference of Forensic Odontology that would take place in Dubrovnik, Croatia, September 9th – 11<sup>th</sup>, is postponed to the next year (2021). The new date for this conference is September 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021. Connected to this, the IOFOS elections took place via an online General Assembly on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

The General Assembly had societies' delegates from: ABOL - Brazilian Association of Forensic Odontology, AFIO - French Association of Forensic Odontology, BAFO – British Association for Forensic Odontology, Croatian Association of Forensic Stomatology, Flemish Association of Dental Experts, German Academy of Forensic Odontostomatology, IAFO - Indian Association of Forensic Odontology, LCFPEM - Laboratory of Forensic and Psychological Sciences Egas Moniz, Polish Society of Forensic Odontology, ProOF – Progetto Odontologia Forense, SASFOS - South

African Society of Forensic Odonto-Stomatology, and SOFIA - Society of Ibero-American Forensic Odontostomatologists.

The agenda followed the issues:

(1) Report – President of IOFOS: with information related to the goals and achievements of the 2017-2020 Board;

(2) Report – Secretary of IOFOS: with information about the national societies member of IOFOS and other communications;

(3) Report – Treasurer of IOFOS: presenting the expenses and the payments from the national societies member of IOFOS;

(4) Report – IOFOS Editor: with the numbers and information related to the Journal of Forensic Odonto-Stomatology;

(5) Vote for the President (2020-2023): the only candidate was Hrvoje Brkić (Croatia), elected as President of IOFOS (2020-2023);



# I-O-F-O-S

(6) Presentation of the new Board of IOFOS (2020-2023): President (Hrvoje Brkic, Croatia), Vice-President (Rüdiger Lessig, Germany), Secretary (Ricardo Henrique Alves da Silva, Brazil), Editor-JFOS (Vilma Pinchi, Italy), Treasurer (Patrick Thevissen, Belgium), Webmaster (Stefano Garatti, Italy), Newsletter-Editor (Marin Vodanović);

(7) Nomination of the Election Committee: Christl Verbiest (Chair, Belgium), Gabriel Fonseca (Argentina), and Thiago Beaini (Brazil); and

(8) Brief communication from the national representatives.





**Jean-Marc Hutt**

The French  
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# The French Association of Forensic Odontology

**O**fficially founded in 1990 A.F.I.O. is the only active association in forensic odontostomatology in France. It regroups a new generation of forensic odontologists and experts. Nowadays it is accepted by all local and national committees and is also helpfully supported by the National French Chamber of Dentistry (NFCD).

## **AFIO Activities 2019-2020:**

On the 3rd and 4th of October 2019, the french city of Lille hosted the thirty-ninth congress of AFIO. A new president, Dr Gwénola Drogou-Saout, and a new board was elected : Drs Jean-Marc Hutt and Hugues Thomas as vice-presidents, Dr Lise Malfroy Camine as general-secretary, Dr Emmanuelle Argence as treasurer, Dr Catherine Blanc as assistant secretary, Dr Geromine Fournier as webmaster, and Dr Thierry Martin, Drs Guy Collet and Philippe Welsch as honoraray members.

This renewal has enabled the emergence of a young, feminized, determined and dynamic generation,

under the authority of our new President.

During this past year, AFIO has worked in close collaboration with the NFCD :

Our past-president Dr Guy Collet participated to a working group for domestic violence sensitization with the NFCD.

We have also participated on the development of the “Alertes Identification” (identification alerts/warnings): When a missing person’s dental practitioner is unknown, the NFCD can now send, by mail, a request to every French dentist in order to find AM data. This process has been successfully applied several times this year.

Finally the AFIO has kept working with the NFCD and the representatives of the main dental softwares, in a common taskforce aiming to build an integrated browser. This numeric device aims to find potential matches of a specific odontogram among the patient files.

AFIO has also worked on the development of its associative network. Thus, a collaboration has started with the ARPD (Assistance Recherche Personnes Disparues – Assistance for



**Figure 1** The new elected board of the AFIO

missing persons researches): a common working group for Missing persons / Unidentified bodies has developed a questionnaire that will be proposed to the SFML (Société Française de Médecine Légale), and sent to every French medicolegal institute, in order to make a point on the identification practices.

Furthermore, the AFIO has involved in the DVI training and planning :

The president Dr Gwénola Drogou-Saout, and the general-secretary Dr Lise Malfroy Camine participated in the INTERPOL DVI sub-working group meeting in May 2019 in Singapour.

Several members of our association also took part to DVI exercises, organized by the French Gendarmerie and the National Police throughout the French territory.

Representatives of the association participated in international forensic

congresses: Several of us took part to the AAFS (American Academy of Forensic Sciences) in Baltimore, in February 2019 as attendees and speakers. Moreover, our Vice-President Dr Jean-Marc Hutt represented the association at the IOFOS dental age estimation workshop organized by Professors emeritus T. Solheim, S. Richter and H. Mörnstad,, in Svalbard (Norway) from March 2nd to 5, 2019. He was also invited as a speaker by Professor Lessig, at the 43rd AKFOS Congress in Mainz (Germany) on October 26, 2019.

Finally, AFIO keeps working on the education to forensic odontology, as several members teach in the faculty of Nantes, Paris and Nancy.



Figure 2 XXXth AFIO congress in Bordeaux

### **XXXth Congress BORDEAUX 1 - 2 October 2020.**

Despite the serious health crisis that affects us all and with the agreement of the authorities, we have decided to maintain our 30th annual congress which took place in the beautiful city of Bordeaux on October first and second, 2020. This decision was carefully considered. The congress, which was uncertain until the last minute, was the first for the partially renewed team in the AFIO office.

A strict sanitary protocol and distancing have been scrupulously applied and respected and we can be delighted that no contamination was to be deplored, thanks to the discipline and the conscience of the 85 participants. More attendees were willing to join us, but we had to limit the number of participants in order to maintain sufficient distancing.

To our regret, but of course we perfectly understood it, the risk of

quarantine was too high for our international attendees and lecturers to join us. We therefore deplored the absence of our Canadian, Croatian, German, Belgian, Norwegian, Italian, Hungarian friends ... We have really missed their expertise and friendship, but we hope and look forward to welcoming them next year!

Following an informal and convivial wine-tasting evening (Bordeaux wine of course!) the congress opened with a judicial odontology session that focused on "the Dental practitioner facing expertise".

This intense one-day conference succeeded in comparing different points of view from experts, insurance company, lawyers, magistrates, but also from teachers and members of the NFCD.

This session was the occasion of studious and friendly exchanges about the informed consent, the dental practitioner responsibilities as well as

cases of odonto-stomatology expertises and unsuccessful implantology treatments.

The AFIO general assembly followed this enriching day that ended with a memorable gala: a traditional cruising barge on the Garonne river took us to a restaurant on the banks, allowing friendly and fruitful discussions in an excellent atmosphere.

Second day of our congress was devoted to the « Evolution of issues and techniques » in dental identification. This very current topic explored the innovations in individual and mass disaster victims identification, dental age estimation, bitemarks analysis but also the autopsy procedures in Covid times. We also discussed dental identification guidelines and the application of new technologies i (3D analysis, virtual anthropology ...).

Despite the difficult conditions, these two days, rich in professional and friendly exchanges, well expressed the kindness and respects of every congress attendees, and revealed the cohesion, the motivation and the energy of the AFIO team. We are looking forward to see you at the 31th Congress next year on the 30th of September and the 1st of October 2021.

For more information you may contact:

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## Report from the IOFOS e-symposium, December 5th, 2020

**W**ith great preparations, IOFOS held an online symposium via YouTube for all interested forensic odontologists, students and other colleagues around the world. The symposium was advertised through the IOFOS' social networks Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn, as well as through the official website [www.iofos.eu](http://www.iofos.eu).

The symposium was held on Saturday, December 5, 2020, organized by about twenty members and over 500 participants from around the world with more than 45 countries represented. The program started at 2 pm Central European Time with instructions for all participants. The Secretary of IOFOS, Ricardo Henrique Alves da Silva and his students were the headquarters for IT

networking. The President of IOFOS first responded and greeted all attendees on behalf of the Executive Board and on his own behalf. He briefly commented on the reasons for the creation of this symposium and announced all the respected speakers and moderators.

As part of this report, we also publish the program and short summaries of lectures. The symposium consisted of several parts: keynote speaker professor Ruediger Lessig participated in the first part. After his presentation, Professor Cristiana Palmela Pereira as moderator announced three lecturers, Professor Vilma Pinchi, Professor John Berketa and Professor Ashith Achaya. All participants were able to ask questions via YouTube, which were read by the moderator, and the



Figure 1 Lecturers and Moderators of the 1st IOFOS online Symposium, December 5th, 2020.

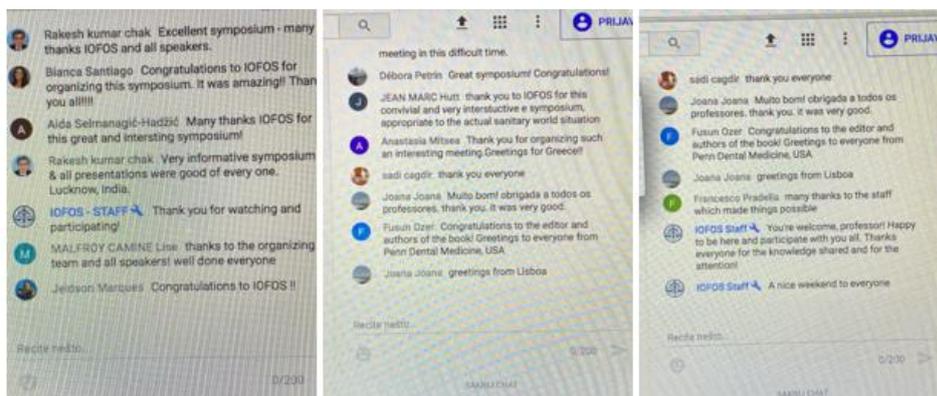


Figure 2 Some of the messages on YouTube after closing the symposium.

speakers answered them. The second session of the lecture was moderated by Gwenola Drogou and Professor Marin Vodanović. The lecturers were Professor Herman Bernitz, Scheila Manica and Thais Xavier. All lectures lasted 15 minutes.

After answering the questions asked by the participants, the symposium continued with the promotion of a new university textbook: Forensic Odonto-Stomatology by IOFOS. The

presentation of the textbook was attended by Hrvoje Brkić for editors, Irena Dawidson for reviewers and Krunoslav Matešić for the publisher. All authors, editors, reviewers and publishers were presented, as well as the possibility of purchasing textbooks at a promotional price. More info about the book: [nslap@nakladaslap.com](mailto:nslap@nakladaslap.com).

With this project, IOFOS reaffirms the role of being a reunion of all Forensic Odontologists and Scientists around the

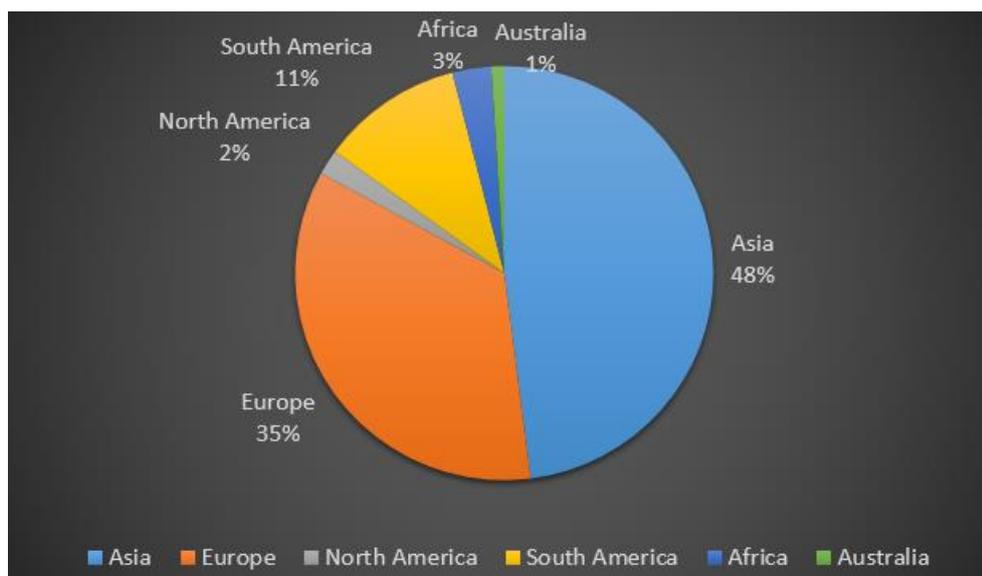


Figure 3 Percentage of participants from around the world in the IOFOS symposium.

world. We made popularization among young colleagues, highlighted the problems in the daily work of the Forensic Odontologist during the pandemic of COVID-19 and showed our leadership in the world of forensic sciences, specifically in Forensic Odontology.

Thanks to all the participants of this huge meeting that you can continue to follow via YouTube (the entire symposium is available to watch): [https://youtu.be/0\\_MPBhfy9z8](https://youtu.be/0_MPBhfy9z8).



## FORENSIC ODONTOLOGY BEFORE AND DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

**Date:** December 5th, 2020, Saturday

**Time:** 2.00 - 5.00 p.m. (CET)

**Platform:** Google Meet (from USP)

**Register in the E-symposium:** [www.iofos.eu](http://www.iofos.eu)

### Programme at a Glance

#### 2.00 - 2.15 p.m. Symposium opening

**Professor Hrvoje Brkić**, IOFOS President

#### 2.15 - 2.45 p.m. Keynote speaker

**Professor Ruediger Lessig** (Germany) Course of Forensic Odontology with focus on identification of unknown victims after mass disasters,

#### *Moderator: Professor Cristiana Pereira (Portugal)*

2.45 - 3.00 p.m. **Professor Vilma Pinchi**, (Italy) The different contributions of forensic odontology during Covid-19 pandemic in Italy

3.00 - 3.15 p.m. **Professor John Berketa**, (Australia) Forensic odontology in Australia - an update

3.15 - 3.30 p.m. **Professor Ashith Achaya** (India) Forensic odontology in India before" and during the COVID-19 pandemic

#### 3.30 - 3.45. p.m. Discussion and coffee break

#### *Moderators: Professor Gwénola Drogou (France) and Professor Marin Vodanović (Croatia)*

3.45 - 4.00 p.m. **Professor Herman Bernitz** (South Africa) Sheltering from COVID -19: using the internet for forensic dental cases

4.00 - 4.15 p.m. **Scheila Mânica** (United Kingdom) Should Forensic Odontology be considered a non-clinical academic programme?

4.15 - 4.30 p.m. **Thais Aparecida Xavier** (Brazil) The challenge for Forensic Odontology in the morgue routine during pandemic

4.30 - 4.45 p.m. **Promotion of the IOFOS Textbook**

4.45 - 5.00 p.m. **Discussion and Closing of the Symposium**

**Professor Ricardo Henrique Alves da Silva**, IOFOS Secretary

## Abstracts

**Course of Forensic Odontology with focus on identification of unknown victims after mass disasters,****Ruediger Lessig***University Hospital Halle (Saale), Institute of Legal Medicine, Halle, Germany*

Forensic dentistry encompasses various areas of specialization and is part of the three forensic morphological subjects in addition to forensic pathology and forensic anthropology. It is therefore an interdisciplinary component of forensic medicine. The lecture informs about the efforts to establish a permanent pool of trained dentists for the German DVI team. The course includes the real training on the deceased and getting to know the structures of the DVI team. It has taken place annually in various forms since 2009. Sometimes in two parts, sometimes as the so-called refresher course and twice with the participation of police officers specially trained for dental documentation, which are part of the DVI team. The need to hold such a course arose after the tsunami in 2004, when suddenly a larger number of dentists were needed for the German DVI team. Experience of this operation has shown that although every dentist can collect the findings on the deceased, not everyone is suitable for such an activity. In addition, various questions have arisen, as the dentists are not police officers. What about payment, health care and insurance coverage? These questions also had to be clarified. One of the first decisions was to make a survey among dentists. The German Academy of Forensic Odontostomatology as an interdisciplinary scientific organization was chosen to do this. The German Academy is attached to the German Society of Legal Medicine and the German Society for Dental, Oral and Craniomandibular Medicine. So members of both societies can join the German Academy of Forensic Odontostomatology. Up to date the German DVI team has up to 20 well trained dentists. The last missions shows that this is well established.

**The different contributions of forensic odontology during Covid-19 pandemic in Italy****Vilma Pinchi***University of Florence, department of health Sciences, Florence, Italy*

The SARS-CoV 2 outbreak showed up in Italy since February 2020 and the medical and dental disciplines experienced personal and systemic inadequacies, health and medico-legal risks for dentists, dental staff and settings. The disciplines dealing with forensic and legal medicine, such as forensic odontology, have been involved since the beginning of the pandemic in the re-organization of the activity in the several fields which it applies to. First forensic odontologists were actually involved in Italy in writing recommendations for the management and PM exams of the bodies, as activities classified at very high risk of SARS-CoV 2 contagion. The judiciary autopsic and identification activity has resumed to the pre-COVID 19 situation at the moment, at least in Florence, where all the bodies are submitted to molecular swabs before PM exams and in case of positivity, appropriate PPE, donning-doffing procedures, specially featured autopsy rooms are used. During the pandemic time we assisted to a high increase of domestic violence cases and forensic odontologists should intensify their activity both as experts of oro-facial injuries or bitemarks and for educational activity. Years ago someone created in Italy the term "the sentry dentist", a term which highlights the crucial role of the dental staff in disclosing possible victims of abuse and forensic odontologists are regularly called to contribute to cultural activity in this field. The most challenging task that the forensic odontologists have been in charge of since the beginning of the outbreak, has been in support of the feverish activity of the Board of Dentists, the dental associations that have struggled to recommend the necessary precautionary procedures and guidelines in dental practice. Several risks with medico-legal implications emerged as very realistic in a practice which implies aerosol production, patients, necessarily without facial masks, in close contact with the dentist or hygienist. The dentists have immediately realized the very high risks of possible complaints or claims coming from patients who assume to have been infected during dental care or employees who could sue the employing dentists.

At the beginning of April 2020, the National Board of Dentists organized a study Group, composed of representatives of dental scientific societies, plus professors in virology, occupational medicine, and forensic odontologists for any medico-legal issues, in order to provide recommendations for dentists and dental settings during pandemic COVID-19. Two medico-legal issues have been mainly considered by the forensic odontologists in the Working Group. First the appropriateness of the treatments during the pandemic period. It is universally accepted that a treatment can be considered legally and ethically appropriate when the risks connected with it is balanced by benefits or, in this case, there is balancement between the risk connected with treatments performed during the Covid time on one side, and the possible risks due to a postponement of some dental cares on the other. Secondly the informed consent for dental treatments. A standardized information about the Covid-19, the transmission routes, the triage, and the preventive measures taken in dental settings according to

the legal provisions has been included in a sort of vademecum. Any information should practically be tailored only for aged patients at higher risks of developing severe forms of Covid 19 because of pre-existing co-morbidities or advanced age. To conclude, COVID-19 pandemic has been – and unfortunately still is – a big challenge, for dentists and for forensic odontologists too.

#### **Forensic odontology in Australia: an update**

**John Berketa**

*University of Adelaide, Dental School, Adelaide, Australia*

COVID-19 has forced operational changes to the way forensic odontology has been conducted. Australia has been fortunate in that we have less proportional deaths due to strict lock downs, the closing of international and state borders and quarantine. Coupled with these restrictions, odontologists were stifled by limits on attendance into mortuaries, teaching practices, research synergy meetings and manpower. Rostering to limit cross interaction were put into effect. The authorities reacted by securing personal protection equipment, testing of the deceased which entered the mortuary and personal contact limits were implemented.

The forced influence of COVID-19 allowed internal reviews on how forensic odontology operating procedures were conducted. The utilisation of CT scanning for casework has been accelerated. Rostering for minimal cross interaction of teams, Zoom/Google meetings between staff and the use of other electronic communication became a priority. The state of Queensland also had their peer reviews over a secure net. In the state of Victoria, lockdown did not cease till mid-October, and all odontology examinations were minimal, with the CT scan the method of choice.

During the downtime further effort was made into conducting education of local police forces in forensic odontology procedures and improving the national database of missing persons.

Once there was no COVID contact cases for a few months in our state, postgraduate attendance into the mortuary recommenced, personal research synergy meetings were scheduled however caution to distancing continued.

#### **Forensic odontology in India before and during the COVID-19 pandemic**

**Ashith B. Acharya**

*With significant contributions from Dr. Hemlata Pandey, Dr. Jayasankar P. Pillai, Dr. J. Augustine, Dr. Manisha Khorate, Dr. Sudheer Balla*

*University of New Delhi, India*

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic is unarguably the single event that has affected every individual in the world. And it has affected the way every individual works. How has this work changed in forensic odontology before and during the pandemic in India.

At the outset, casework in general has reduced following the onset of the pandemic. While several parts of India have witnessed a drastic reduction in cases, especially in relation to age estimation, dental autopsies and identification (although a few regions have not experienced such a reduction, notably in bite mark investigation). Reduction in the number of cases is due to (1) inability of performing full dental autopsies except in extreme circumstances and frequently with targeted dissection, (2) reduced referral of civil cases, with police focusing on criminal cases per se, (3) lack of production of suspects to avoid contact with potential Covid-exposed individuals, (4) courts taking up only urgent cases post-lockdown, and (5) non-Covid related activities remaining suspended including medical boards that oversee age estimation cases. Other salient changes include a tendency for production of dental evidence without the presentation of the individual per se, for example, the police handing over only radiographs in age estimation cases rather than presenting the radiograph with the person of interest, and increase in the use of full-fledged personal protective equipment (PPE) and physical distancing in cases where conventionally the same was not previously mandated (e.g., bite mark evidence collection). The approach to teaching forensic odontology has seen a paradigm shift towards online methods, with certain training programmes focusing almost exclusively on online training modules. Trainers have been compelled to make major changes in terms of online lecturing and practical guidance, necessitating digitisation of material to ensure online tutoring using these digital models.

The one area that is likely to have been least impacted is research in forensic odontology. Studies making use of retrospective samples, particularly radiological studies of digitised radiographic images allow data collection and analysis in the comfort of one's computer. However, mortuary-based research

appears to have reduced. Nevertheless, research has seen increase in online surveys rather than physical surveys. While the overall research output per se may remain unaffected, the type of research being done is different—for example, studies with prospective sample collection has been affected and may need to be completed with reduced sample size.

## **Sheltering from Covid-19: using the internet or forensic cases**

**Herman Bernitz**

*University of Pretoria, School of Dentistry, Pretoria, South Africa*

The Covid -19 pandemic forced governments to implement harsh lockdown restrictions on the movement and contact between people on a personal and professional level. Those individuals older than 60 and especially those with associated co-morbidities were encouraged to self- isolate even if they were regarded as essential workers. This created challenges related to service rendering in many disciplines of dentistry. Forensic dentistry at the University of Pretoria initiated a plan of action which would allow the work to continue but safeguard vulnerable individuals from the Corona-19 virus. This was achieved by implementing a plan in which young healthy qualified colleagues were co-opted to do all the practical work both in the lab and in the mortuary. They photographed the evidence, took the necessary radiographs and did the required charting. This information was then sent via the internet for analysis and writing of the final forensic reports to experienced forensic dentists who were in isolation hundreds of kilometres from the university. The cases included identification of bodies and bite marks in both skin and inanimate objects. Although no age estimation cases presented themselves during the lockdown period, tooth sections could have been and cut and captured with the aid of an Opeiro slide scanner and sent for analysis. The plan worked extremely well, and no interruption in service delivery was experienced. As the courts were closed during the few months of the lockdown, no cases were scheduled for court appearances. The use of the internet in the analysis and final reporting of forensic dental cases should be considered when there are no resident forensic dentists in isolated geographic areas. The evidence collection can be easily taught to practicing dentists, leaving the analysis and evaluation of the cases to experienced forensic dental experts geographically far removed

## **Should Forensic Odontology be considered a non-clinical academic programme?**

**Scheila Mânica**

*University of Dundee, United Kingdom*

Society has been aided by Forensic Odontology since the 19th century and the teaching practice has internationally expanded in the last 30 years. Forensic programmes must follow international or local standard operational protocols, principles or guidelines and members of Schools of Dentistry should acknowledge differential aspects of Forensic Odontology for better understanding of its very nature. For instance, Forensic Odontology is considered a 'non-clinical' academic programme in a few countries but the terms 'clinical' and 'non-clinical' might cause confusion between peers and the COVID-19 pandemic make it more evident.

Most of the current concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic involve dental autopsies and face to face practical trainings but the issues regarding the theoretical component of Forensic Odontology teaching should also be discussed. Moreover, students from different backgrounds might have high educational and occupational aspirations that are unrelated to the past and current reality.

The aim of this presentation is to briefly discuss challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic in the Forensic Odontology/Dentistry programmes in the United Kingdom (UK).

This discussion should be observed as exposing difficulties and challenges that could be assessed and transformed with the aim of protecting students, staff members, and the society in which these are inserted.

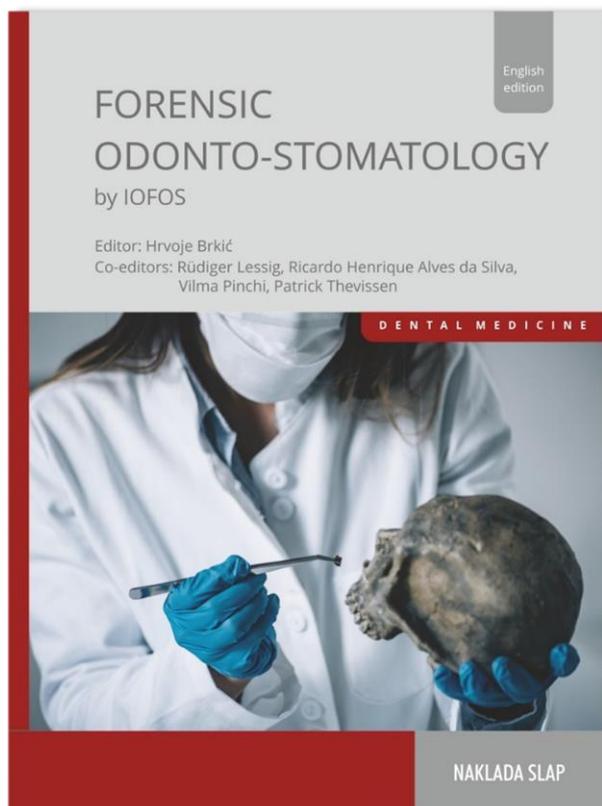
## **The challenge for Forensic Odontology in the morgue routine during pandemic**

**Thais Aparecida Xavier**

*University of São Paulo, School of Dentistry of Ribeirão Preto & Police of Paraná State, Brazil*

Coronavirus pandemic has generated many impacts on life in society. In that conjuncture, several concerns have arisen related to dentists' professional activities. Regarding Forensic Odontology, the point is how to work safely in a local such as a morgue. In a morgue routine, forensic odontologists are

responsible for human identification by teeth. The detailed evaluation of dental characteristics is a very significant methodology to identify a person, and many times it could be the best way to achieve this result. When proceeding with an identification process, forensic odontologists work in an environment where exists a high risk of contamination, aerosol-generating procedures, and the flow of several employees in the autopsies room. To avoid the contamination of those professionals is necessary, for example, to use proper personal protective equipment, adopt correct biosafety procedures, and keep the environment ventilated and clean according to standard recommendations. This lecture will specify the conducts that forensic odontologists must pay attention to during human identification cases, show the challenges involved in the daily routine of those experts, and discuss each step to obtain more safety working in a morgue.



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## 40 years ago: first textbook on forensic odontology in Dutch

The year 2020 is a special year for forensic odontology in Belgium as it celebrates the 40th anniversary of the publication of the first textbook on Forensic Odontology in Dutch by the pioneers of forensic odontology in Belgium. Three young dentists fascinated by the new science of forensic odontology and supported by their Professor Dr. Guido Vanherle from Catholic University Leuven decided to fill the gap in Dutch language on a forensic science they discovered a few years earlier.

The book cover shows pictures from an identification case solved by superimposing AM- and PM photos of an unidentified victim and done by Etienne Tormans,

All three main authors graduated from KU Leuven in the 70's and discovered forensic odontology by different means and in different ways, but immediately became very enthusiastic about the relatively young branch of forensic science which was only developed in a few European countries (Scandinavian countries, UK) and the USA.



**Figure 1 Gerechtelijke Tandheelkunde by Yvo Vermynen, Etienne Tormans, Eddy De Valck, Prof. Guido Vanherle, Published in 1980 in Leuven by Acco, Leuven, Belgium, 292 pages.**



**Yvo Vermynen**

Shortly after graduating from Dental School at KU Leuven, Yvo Vermynen realized that being a dentist meant continuing learning. During one of his trips to the University Library he came accidentally across a book on "Forensic Dentistry" by Cameron and Sims.

As he had no clue what 'forensic' stood for his triggered his attention and he became fascinated with the stories about human identification, dental age estimation, bite mark investigation

While looking for more information on this subject he concluded that this undiscovered territory in Belgium. There were even not so many dentists worldwide being involved in forensic odontology.

Quickly he enrolled in an Aviation Medicine course in Halton, UK Royal Air force where he met Dr. Ian Hill, a forensic pathologist and dentist, followed by an internship with Bernard Sims in London.

Through further contacts in the forensic world he met Prof. Keiser- Nielsen, Denmark, one of the pioneers in forensic odontology who introduced him to other colleagues worldwide.

From 1974 he started lecturing about the subject to general dentists and this is where he caught the attention of two other young dentists who became his partners in crime in Belgium.



**Etienne Tormans** (†1994) knew Yvo well from their years together at KU Leuven Dental School and became

immediately interested in his friend's project.

Together they started promoting forensic odontology among legal

authorities, media and other parties concerned. He quickly became the go-to odontologist for the Antwerp Courts and worked closely with the local Police forces on a number of high profile cases.

After a few years he became the founding President of the Flemish Association of Dental Experts, a position he kept until he passed away too early in 1994.



**Eddy De Valck** became interested in forensic odontology while attending a lecture by Yvo Vermylen as a senior student

at Dental School KU Leuven.

He immediately had the feeling that this was the specialty in dentistry he would pursue a career in apart from his private practice.

While serving as a dentist in the Medical Army Corps he took a postgraduate formation in Criminology and Criminalistics at the Ministry of Justice where he was able to make a lot of contacts with Policemen and Magistrates. He later became a lecturer at this school.

The three 'boy scouts' – still very young - as they were sometimes called by older forensic pathologists who did not like the fact that odontologists were getting involved in identification as they considered this their territory, continued with enthusiasm their way, developing their specialty into a

recognized science in Belgium. It would take them some years though.

After the major plane crash in 1977 in Tenerife, where 583 people lost their lives. They contacted the odontologists from the Netherlands who had been involved in the identification of the Dutch victims. Speaking the same language was favorable for the contacts and exchanging experiences. As a result of these contacts the idea was forwarded that all countries should have a DVI team to be activated in case of a major disaster.

In May 1978, a meeting was organized in Brussels under the Presidency of Colonel Willy Bruggeman of the National Police Force (Gendarmerie). Most parties involved in DVI matters were present but at the end of the day it was concluded that there was no need for setting up a DVI team as everything was taking care off and looked after.

The forensic odontologist were extremely disappointed as they knew there was nothing and they were proven to be right when another disaster happened in Spain (The Tarragona Inferno at Los Alfaques) in 1978 with 215 casualties from different countries.

At that time when intervention of a Belgian DVI team was necessary it became obvious that no such team existed. It took too long before a quickly composed team could depart to Spain. None of the 'forensic odontologists' were invited to be part of the team.

Fortunately, Prof. Dr. Guido Vanherle, KU Leuven, was asked to take part in the

activities and thanks to his diplomacy his three former students did not stay completely out of the loop.



**Prof. Dr. Guido Vanherle** stayed the driving force behind his youngsters and continued to motivate them as their mentor. During one of their

brainstorming meetings the idea was launched to write a book in Dutch as not much, not to say almost anything, existed in their mother tongue.

In 1980 the book "Gerechtelijke tandheelkunde" was released by Acco, Leuven. The main authors were the three forensic odontologists with guest contributions from Guido Vanherle, Ian Hill, Aad van den Bos, Herman Franssen. The book covered the Belgian Legal System, Forensic Odontology, DVI and other topics related to the subject. A second printing had to follow soon as the book was a big success in Belgium and the Netherlands.

The textbook would be an inspiration for many young Belgian and Dutch dentists to show interest and become involved in forensic odontology.

That same year 1980 saw the 1st International Multidisciplinary Symposium on Disaster Victim Identification in Apeldoorn, the Netherlands gathering DVI team from Europe, USA, and an Interpol representative to discuss future cooperation in mass disasters.

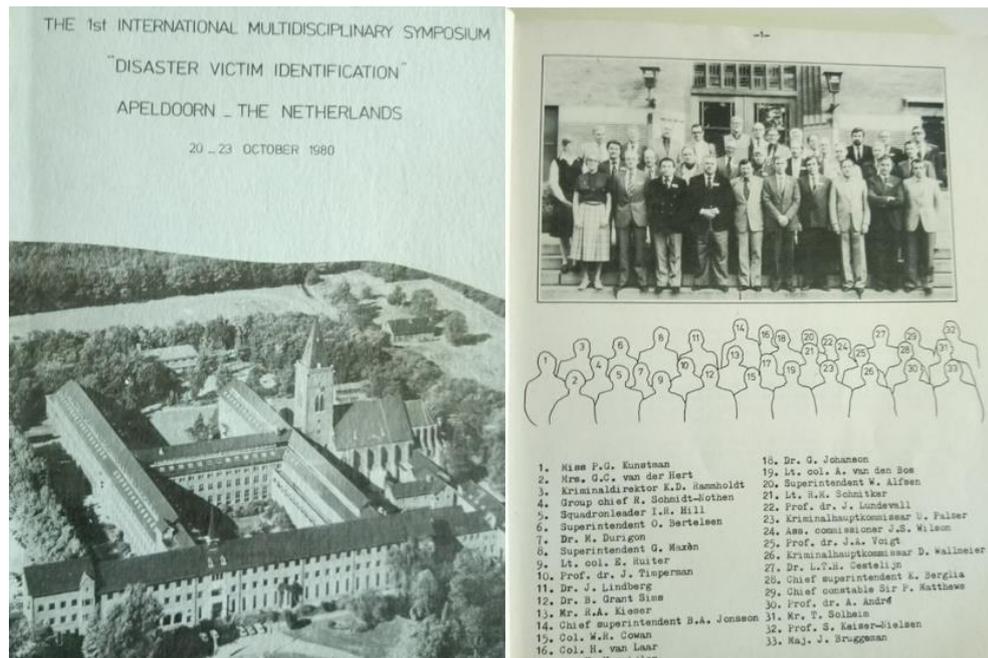


Figure 2 The location and participants to the 1st international multidisciplinary symposium "Disaster Victim Identification" Apeldoorn, 20-23 October 1980.

Most countries were present with a police officer, forensic pathologist and a forensic odontologist creating the framework of what would later become the Interpol DVI Standing Committee.

In the past 40 years Belgian forensic odontologists have continued to play a considerable role at international level in the field of forensic odontology taking key positions at IOFOS an Interpol DVI Standing Committee.

The KU Leuven offers one of the few postgraduate programs in the world to become Master in Forensic Odontology and has been the venue for multiple IOFOS meetings.

# “Earth, Wind and Fire (and Water): The Elements and Investigative Forensics”, 27th of February 2021

**H**oliday greetings to each of you from the American Society of Forensic Odontology! It is our sincere wish that we all enter happily and safely into 2021 and find ourselves back together again at meetings around the world very soon.

The ASFO would like to invite you to enjoy our virtual 2021 educational program entitled “Earth, Wind and Fire (and Water): The Elements and Investigative Forensics”, which will be held on Saturday the 27th of February 2021 tentatively scheduled from 1100 to 1600 (EST) eastern standard time.

We understand with our membership living in numerous locations around the world joining the meeting in live time may be difficult. Therefore, your registration also includes access to the content for 30 days after the meeting for you to view when your schedule allows. The link to the ASFO website for registration may be found at the bottom of this letter. We encourage all to take advantage of ASFO membership which will include registration for the program and 2021 membership for \$100. Registration for the program is

also available without ASFO membership.

Also, one of the main missions of the ASFO is supporting Forensic Odontology related research for those with an interest in conducting a qualified research project. The ASFO has two annual grant opportunities with a maximum of \$3000. We encourage you to submit a proposal regardless of research experience. The grant application and outline of the submission process can be accessed through our website. Please direct any questions to our Research Committee Chair, Dirk van der Meer at [Dvdmeer@asfo.org](mailto:Dvdmeer@asfo.org).

We hope to see you online at our 2021 virtual program!



<http://asfo.org/>