

Look into research in forensic odontology



In modern days many researchers have shown various contributions in the field of forensic odontology that have brought remarkable changes in forensics. Very few include bite mark, age estimation with the help of dental features, gender, racial identification using metric and nonmetric analysis, human abuse (child, spousal, elder), and identification comparing antemortem and postmortem dental records.

Application of the knowledge of dental sciences in the field of forensic for detection and investigation of crime and administration of justice is commonly followed. However, within India, the routine use of forensic dentistry is not yet a reality, but every medicolegal case will entail a detailed forensic medical investigation.

The inclusion of forensic odontology in the revised Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) curriculum in 2007 was a good move by the Dental Council of India and the founder members of Indian Association of Forensic Odontology (IAFO) who really have struggled for the development of the field of forensic odontology. Because with our present availability and feasibility we are turning around the same clock of age estimation, bite marks, rugoscopy, cheiloscopy, let us question ourselves whether to what extent we are applying them in the practical field. Along with it we should additionally think of researches where we could apply our knowledge of dentistry in forensics. Forensics is not a small area; it includes several branches such as anthropology, biology, pathology, chemistry, linguists, entomology, deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) profiling, and cytology. Surely, if proper research is carried out, a forensic odontologist can be an important subfield in forensics.

An attempt has to be made by all dentists who really have an interest in the field of forensic odontology for the use of knowledge of dental sciences for research in the field of forensic dentistry. Because awareness, knowledge, and interest among the dental professionals have increased in forensic odontology, people interested in the field of forensics can question themselves about where they could apply knowledge of dental sciences in the research field.

For example, some of them include:

- Can the organic matrix of tooth be used for gender

determination?

- Collagen type in oral mucosa helps in gender determination
- What exactly may be the cause of postmortem pink teeth?
- Any method that is simple and faster for exposure of oral cavity during postmortem
- Can we study the degeneration rate of oral mucosal cell where approximate postmortem interval can be assessed?
- In what manner can we use the advanced diagnostic aids such as polymerase chain reaction (PCR), and fluorescent in situ hybridization (FISH) for forensics?
- Importance of a forensic dentist in a Disaster Victim Identification team
- Saliva collection in sexual assault, child physical abuse, etc.
- To determine the type of toxic substance by histological assessment of oral mucosa tissue.

So, to achieve these it is necessary for the Dental Council of India, the members of IAFO to provide support where it is necessary for researchers for exposure in the field that enhances the knowledge for practical application.

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