



NEWSLETTER

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR FORENSIC ODONTO-STOMATOLOGY

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Photo: Central Botswana, Africa

Editor's page



Dear Colleagues

It is difficult to believe that we are already in the second half of 2009. The past few months have seen some international disasters one of which is briefly reported on in this issue of the Newsletter (p6). Please send us reports on your involvement in such disasters. I was also very pleased to see the child abuse awareness campaign that was initiated by the recent *"Child Abuse and Neglect: preventive role of medical doctors and dentists"* conference in Italy (p 4). It is my opinion that this is a neglected subject in the dental fraternity resulting in professional clinicians missing/ignoring these lesions. As health professionals we should actively engage in the daily evaluation of child patients, especially with regard to the presence of lesions that may relate to any form of physical abuse. I would be interested to hear from you if and how this topic is broached in your dental faculties as well as your opinions on the role of the general dentist and the forensic odontologist (which sometimes mean that it was already too late to save that child) in this regard.

Congratulations to the winners of the 2008 German Gösta Gustafson Award. Forensic Dentistry is a science that can only grow if worked on and nurtured continuously and all trials and errors published for others to see and learn from. The Head of our Department of Oral Pathology and Oral Biology, Prof Willie van Heerden always says that research is never research if it has not been published for others to evaluate.

From the next issue of the Newsletter onwards I would like to open a column for letters to the editor. This will serve as a discussion forum for the group and I invite you to comment on current contributions by other members of this community or if you have only something brief to communicate which you previously might have felt not worth writing a whole article about for the Newsletter.

Kind regards to all

President's Page



Dear Colleagues

First of all I would like to thank all the individual members who updated their particulars on our world wide web - the response was amazing. Thank you to my wife Zephné, our webmaster, for all the hours spent I sorting and posting the new data. The third volume of the new electronic format of the Journal of Forensic Odonto-Stomatology is now available on our website. It contains interesting articles from a wide spectrum of authors. Thank you, Jules (editor) and Glynnny (better half) for all the hard work. We have been approached by an outside company to index our journal on their data base and we are in the process of drawing up the contract. This will give us an increased exposure and a wider author base. The listing on Pubmed poses several IT problems but we hope to have them sorted out in the near future. All the material has to be captured as XML files which is a mammoth task requiring some serious programming skills, for which we will have to pay some one. If there is anybody out there willing to do it for the love of the organisation, please let me know. It is encouraging to see how many Forensic odontology meetings are taking place within our organisation; this can only be good for the organisation and the discipline in particular. Some of the meeting details are included in this newsletter. If anybody is hosting such a meeting please feel free to let us know and we can advertise it on our web page under coming events.

The first of South Africa's two soccer tournaments, the Federations Cup, has come and gone without incident. The World Cup in 2010 will however be on a much larger scale and will see a dramatic increase in air traffic, overseas visitors and new stadiums packed with supporters and their vuvuzelas. If there are any members of IOFOS who plan to attend the world cup, please let me know the details of your travel plans so that I can place your names on a list of foreign forensic experts in the country during that period. The possibility also exists that we could arrange an academic program before or after the tournament which can be added on to your itinerary. Who says you can't mix work with pleasure?

In closing I would like to congratulate Sonja and her hubby on the birth of their second child, and also thank her for getting this news letter out during her maternity leave. You do a stunning job, thank you.

Regards from a chilly South Africa,
Herman Bernitz

CHILD ABUSE AND DENTAL NEGLECT PREVENTION IN ITALY

By: Emilio Nuzzolese

Vice-president Italian Society of Forensic Dentistry



In March 2009, the Italian Society of Forensic Dentistry (SIOLA - Società Italiana di Odontoiatria Legale e Assicurativa, www.siola.eu) in association with the Italian Association of Dentists (AIO - Associazione Italiana Odontoiatri, www.aio.it) organized a conference titled “**Child Abuse and Neglect: preventive role of medical**

doctors and dentists” in Bari (Southern Italy). The conference focused on the topic of child maltreatment in a multidisciplinary perspective involving judges, psychologists, medical doctors, dentists, lawyers, nurses and dental hygienists. It was the first meeting in Italy addressing this subject with specific reference to the role of the dental team and raised a lot of interest amongst this group.

Even though the prevention and diagnosis of child abuse is usually undertaken by pediatricians and psychologists, the dental team plays an important role since areas of the head and neck may also be targeted in various ways (*and various signs of sexual abuse may also be visible intra-orally* [*Pediatric Dentistry 2003 Mar-Apr;25(2):149-53*]- Ed). The responsibilities of oral health professionals may be summarized as the recognition,

recording, and reporting of suspected abuse cases to the authorities. As most dentists and dental hygienists are not aware of this issue and do not have enough resources to manage such events, it is important for odontologists already involved in medico-legal investigative activities to fill this gap.

The scientific program of the conference held in Bari was appreciated by approximately 500 health and law professionals from various Italian regions. This conference can be considered as the Italian starting point of a concrete multidisciplinary approach to child abuse which must involve odontologists which is particularly crucial when dealing with potential bite marks on the abused child.

It is the intention of SIOLA and AIO to repeat this event in Rome during Spring 2010. Hopefully this will create an even wider awareness within the national dental community on the importance of child abuse, dental neglect and ultimately their role in child protection.

THE GÖSTA GUSTAFSON AWARD – The Award of the German Academy of Forensic Odontostomatology (AKFOS)

By Klaus Röttscher

Chairman of the German Academy of Forensic Odontostomatology

In 2002, after receiving the consent of his wife Anna-Greta Gustafson, the German Academy of Forensic Odontostomatology (AKFOS) of the German Society of Dental Oral and Craniomandibular Sciences (DGZMK) and the German Society of Legal Medicine (DGRM) founded an award named after Professor Gustafson. The aim of the biennial Gösta Gustafson Award was to acknowledge and show appreciation to those individuals for the best scientific work submitted in the area of Forensic Dentistry as determined by the board of AKFOS. This should emphasize the scientific importance of Forensic Dentistry.

Suggestions for recipients of the award are collected by the board of AKFOS after which their suggestions is then submitted by the chairman of AKFOS to the board of directors of the German Society of Dental Oral and Craniomandibular Sciences (DGZMK). If the suggestions are in accordance to the guidelines of this award the board of AKFOS agrees on the winner of the award. The decision of the board of directors is final. The course of law is impossible.

The first to receive the Award in 2002 was Prof. Dr. odont. Tore Solheim (Oslo, Norway) for his exceptional contribution to forensic dentistry and Prof. Dr. Cyril J. Thomas (Sydney, Australia) for the best journalistic work in the area of forensic dentistry and editor of the Journal of Forensic Odonto-Stomatology. Both are ambassadors for forensic dentistry who have contributed significantly to the international success of forensic odonto-stomatology.

In 2004 the award of the German Academy of Forensic Odontostomatology (AKFOS) as an appreciation and acknowledgement for identifying the victims of the large disaster on September 11, 2001 is given in Mainz, Germany, to the New York City Medical Examiner's Dental Identification Team and its Chief Forensic Dentist Jeffrey Burkes, DDS, with respect to the success of forensic odontology advancing Forensic Dentistry in the United States:

In 2006 the German dentists received the award for identifying the victims of the Tsunami-disaster in Thailand and Sri Lanka 12/2004 and it was given to PD Dr. med. Andreas Schmeling, Berlin, and PD Dr. med. dent. Andreas Olze, Berlin, as an appreciation and acknowledgement for their scientific work on „Forensic Age Diagnostics“.

In 2008 four German scientists received the award in Mainz: Prof. Dr. Dr. Werner Hahn, Prof. Dr. Dr. Rolf Endris, co-founder of the “Arbeitskreis für Forensische Zahnheilkunde”, Prof. Dr. Dr. Rolf Singer and Prof. Dr. Franz Schübel for their engagement in Forensic Dentistry.



From left to right:

*Karl-Rudolf Stratmann
(secretary of DGZMK),
Franz Schübel, Rolf
Endris, Rolf Singer,
Klaus Rötzscher*

*Foto: Claus
Grundmann*

The Lukla Air Crash Disaster – German DVI Mission October 2008

By: Hans-Peter Kirsch

**Reserve Major Medical Corps, German Academy of Forensic Odontostomatology,
DVI team of the Bundeskriminalamt**

On October 8th 2008, a plane had crashed on landing at Lukla airport Nepal. The author was deployed to Nepal as a member of the DVI team of the Bundeskriminalamt. His task was to perform the odonto-stomatologic post-mortem examination of 15 dead bodies, supposed to be 1 Nepalese, 2 Australian and 12 German passengers.

The post-mortem examination comprised entirely paperless dental charting using the DVI System International software (Plass Data). There have been many characteristic odontostomatologic findings leading to identifications after ante-mortem – post-mortem comparison such as congenitally missing permanent teeth, gingival tissue transplants, prosthodontics and dental implants.



Like teeth dentures are well protected within the oral cavity. This partial upper denture withstood the high-speed impact as well as the fire with hardly any signs of damage.



Missing tooth 12 and closed gap in region 12.



Metal bridge tooth 37-34 and elongated tooth 38

The small number of victims induced a broad scale gridded age estimation based on the DMFT index, abrasion, and periodontal aspects. The X-ray examinations were performed with the Nomad portable X-ray system, Dental Eye 3.1 software and Kodak dental intraoral E speed film (backup solution) in confident cooperation with the Australian DVI team. The photographic documentation was performed with digital SLR cameras. Each picture set contained one en face and two lateral pictures (right/left) with teeth occluded, two occlusal upper jaw/lower jaw pictures and additional detail pictures.



Left: Two implants region 32 and 42. Abutment region 42 incompletely screwed.

Right: Corresponding post-mortem radiograph

All Australian and German passengers could be identified free of doubt. Twelve passengers were identified by dental identification and two passengers by a combination of fingerprint and dental characteristics.

Detailed odontostomatologic ante-mortem documentation and post-mortem radiography again proved to be crucial in forensic investigation.

Courses in Forensic Odontology

The Nordic (IOFOS) course in Identification - 2010

By: Tore Solheim

Course organizer

Although scheduled to take place in Helsinki, Finland in August this year we regret that, due to unfortunate circumstances, it had to be postponed to next year, **preliminary dates June 28th to July 3rd 2010** where it will take place **in Oslo**. Further details on the course will be published at a later stage. We promise a rewarding program based on the concepts practiced by Interpol and urge all interested parties to reserve time for this course in their diaries next year.

The course will consist of short theoretical introductions followed by practical sessions where all aspects of a forensic odontologic identification will be exercised. Mass disaster situations with introduction and practical training in the DVI System International, the computer system recommended by Interpol, will be given. The course will therefore have international value as the police in many countries have now changed to the Interpol system for identification. To be able to do forensic identification after international disasters in the future, it will be mandatory to have had an introduction to these principles as used by Interpol. Experience from the tsunami in Thailand proved that forensic odontologists familiar with the Interpol system could quickly be introduced to the work and do a good job.

Preliminary interest and request for further information can be directed to the course organizer at solheim@odont.uio.no.

The New Zealand Society of Forensic Dentistry Celebrates a Quarter Century of Human Identification in Wellington, 2009

By: Zaf Khouri

President, NZSFD

Greetings to all members of the NZSFD and other associated agencies and individuals.

As you are probably aware, 2009 is a big year for us - the 25th anniversary of the formation of our Society.

To mark this milestone, we have decided to make our annual meeting this year a particularly memorable event. This has required some changes to our usual format.

We have put together a very full programme, and invited our Australian colleagues to join us. The scientific programme this year will run over two full days (Friday 11 September and Saturday 12 September). The regional round-up of casework and the Society's business meeting will take place on the Sunday morning before we all disperse.

We have organised a fantastic couple of days for you. Our keynote speaker is Dr David Sweet O.C., from Vancouver. We are absolutely delighted that Dr Sweet has agreed to speak at our meeting. Dr Sweet will have the floor all day on Friday, and will cover a lot of ground.

On Saturday morning, we will be addressed by Dr Maurice Churton, founder of the NZSFD. Maurice has kindly agreed to speak to us about the history of forensic dentistry in New Zealand and formation of our Society. He will be followed by Dr David Antunovic, who will give an introduction to Erebus disaster – the event that was the catalyst for the formation of the NZSFD. Inspector Stuart Leighton of the New Zealand Police will then address us on a policeman's perspective and his own personal insights and experiences around dealing with the Erebus crash.

On Saturday afternoon, Dr Richard Bassed from Melbourne will give us a summary of Operation Phoenix – the 2009 Victorian Bushfires. Following that presentation, Dr Tony Hill (also from Melbourne) will guide us through a short tabletop DVI exercise.

The social programme will consist of the President's function at 5:30 pm on Friday, and the Conference Dinner on Saturday night. Be prepared to be entertained by an iconic kiwi celebrity speaker after dinner – our own Tom Scott!

A limited number of additional tickets for partners wishing to come to the Conference Dinner (very much encouraged!) are available from our Secretary, dr Antunovic.

We know you will enjoy this meeting tremendously and look forward to seeing you in Wellington.

You can access the detail on the web page (Ed) at:
<http://www.nzsfd.co.nz/NZSFD/Events.html>

