



# NEWSLETTER

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR FORENSIC ODONTO-STOMATOLOGY

Feb 2011



*Blackchested Snake Eagle - Z Bernitz*

## Index

Editor's page	P2
President's Page	P3
IAFS Madeira 2011	P4
From the National Societies	P6
New Zealand Society of Forensic Odontology	P6
Report of INTERPOL meeting May 2010	P8
X-rays in burn victims	P12

## Editor's page



Dear Colleagues

Being Editor of the Newsletter for IOFOS for 6 years now has been a little bit like a rollercoaster ride! Some Newsletters were so full that I found it difficult to shrink it to an acceptable 1MB before pressing the send button. On the other side months would pass without any letter or news from any society to liven up the next issue. The current executive of IOFOS will reach the end of its second term of serving IOFOS soon. After this issue I hope to get at least one more Newsletter out before handing over to the next Editor. I hereby invite all of you to send a small contribution for our next and last Newsletter, even if only a paragraph.

First of all I want to offer my sincerest condolences to Victor Eastmond and his family for the loss of their son.

In this Newsletter you will find information on the grand IAFS meeting which will take place in the beautiful Madeira. It promises to be a well-organised congress with numerous lectures by world-class speakers, workshops to interest all involved as well as general meetings of various groups, all with the same mission namely forensic sciences. Accompanying persons will enjoy this conference just as much as those attending the official program! Please find detail elsewhere in this letter.

An interesting piece was received by Prof Tore Solheim on the problems he has with the changes that were made to the Interpol forms for "Identification" and "Comparison". I feel strongly that members of IOFOS should comment on his concerns with reasons why they are either for, or against these form changes. I have to apologise for the quality of the 2002 forms in this Newsletter. They are available should someone want to evaluate them more closely.

Dr Bert Sligenberg from the Netherlands wrote a nice short article on an x-ray technique they use in burn victims. We use a different technique that works just as well for us and it would be good to hear how other institutions handle this kind of body. Please send me your comments and I will compile a small report.

Kind regards, Sonja Boy

## President's Page



Dear Colleagues,

I can hardly believe that six years have passed since taking office as IOFOS president in 2005. It feels like yesterday that I wrote the first president's report for the newsletter highlighting the decisions taken at the Hong Kong meeting. Many changes have taken place since then including the election of a multi-national executive, a centralised treasury, a fully indexed online journal and an up to date IOFOS web page. Many new member countries have joined IOFOS, including several old members who re-joined after letting their memberships lapse. This has not just happened, but taken many hours of dedication by loyal members of the organisation. Several very well run conferences have also taken place over the past six years, and were generally well attended by our members. Forensic dentistry has been represented at several FDI'S during this period, which has exposed other members of the dental profession to our field of expertise.

Forensic science has been popularised by the media, creating interest amongst younger people on a broad front. It was extremely heartening to see the number of young researchers at the Leuven meeting, expounding new ideas and using sophisticated computer technology to tackling old problems in new innovative ways. This is what forensic dentistry needs, if it wants to remain relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

I encourage you all to attend the IAFS Madeira meeting which will take place between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of September this year. We have Christiana on the organising committee who has made sure that IOFOS members will be well cared for during their stay on the island. Our Triennial general meeting will take place during the conference, and matters concerning IOFOS will be discussed. IOFOS is your organisation, so come and elect a committee of your choice, to steer the organisation for the next three years.

Kind regards,  
Herman Bernitz

# FS Madeira 2011

*Prof. Duarte Nuno Vieira*  
*IAFS and WPMO President*

*Prof. Angel Carracedo*  
*MAFS President*

*Carlos Farinha*  
*Co-President of the Organizing Committee*



Dear Colleague,

**From 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> September 2011**, the 19<sup>th</sup> Triennial Meeting of the International Association of Forensic Sciences (IAFS) will be held in Funchal (Madeira, Portugal), together with the 9<sup>th</sup> Triennial Meeting of the World Police Medical Officers (WPMO) and the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Mediterranean Academy of Forensic Sciences (MAFS). This joint meeting will be preceded by workshops that will take place between 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> September. (**Bite mark workshop on Monday 12<sup>th</sup>, see program**)

Several other international associations will also hold their board meetings and/or organize scientific sessions and workshops during IAFS, WPMO & MAFS 2011. These include the AAFS, ENFSI, WAML, ECLM, IALM, FASE, RIAMLCF, ICRC, IRCT, TIFS, **IOFOS** and IFSA. Although the official language of the meetings will be English, special oral and poster sessions will also take place in French and Spanish as well as parallel meetings in Spanish and Portuguese.

From the scientific point of view, IAFS, WPMO & MAFS 2011 will surely be an unforgettable event and, probably, one of the best scientific meetings ever in the area of forensic sciences. It will involve some of the most renowned international specialists in the field, and all areas of the forensic sciences will be open to discussion and analysis. It is expected the participation of more than 80 countries.

Madeira is an island paradise, with stunning scenery and a subtropical climate. For many, it is one of the most beautiful places in the world. With a wide range of activities to entertain tourists, it is a very popular holiday destination. Any stay in Madeira, and its city of Funchal, will certainly prove to be memorable.

All the information about IAFS, WPMO & MAFS 2011– scientific and social programs, registration, sponsorship opportunity, travel and accommodation special offers, invitation letter, commercial exhibitions, etc. – is available at [www.iafs2011.mj.pt](http://www.iafs2011.mj.pt). You can contact us by telephone (+351 239 854 276/242), fax (+351 239 836 470/820 549) or email: [iafs2011@mj.pt](mailto:iafs2011@mj.pt).

If you require an official invitation letter for a visa or funding purposes, the organizing committee will be pleased to supply it, under the terms of the conditions stated on the website.

Please be aware of the deadline dates for early registration (April 30<sup>th</sup>) and for abstract submission (May 31<sup>st</sup>).

We would be very grateful if you could publicize this information around your institution, passing it on to anyone that may be interested in taking part in the Conference.

Hoping to welcome you in Funchal!

## From the National Societies



***By Dr David M. Antunovic***  
***Secretary/Treasurer NZSFO***

The New Zealand Society of Forensic Odontology (NZSFO) was formed in June 1984 by a group of dedicated dentists and specialist dentists, mainly as a result of the Mount Erebus Disaster involving an Air New Zealand aircraft in Antarctica, in 1979. Following this very unique and extremely difficult recovery operation in the Antarctic region, the need for a dedicated dental society with members to undertake forensic dental procedures and identification practices, was realized.

Today the NZSFO membership consists of dentists and dental specialists, complemented by a good number of associate members including pathologists, DSAs, dental hygienists, dental therapists, dental technicians and coroners. An elected executive oversees the general activities of the Society and around the country Regional Coordinators provide the police and coroners with local points of contact, facilitating smooth access to dental forensic experts.

The NZSFO meets annually (usually in early May) in the capital city, Wellington, for a two day conference and annual general meeting. On the second day, the Society conducts a unique regional "round-up" that offers the Regional Coordinators an opportunity to present all the cases for the year from around New Zealand for discussion, education and constructive criticism.

In 2009 the NZSFO celebrated its 25th jubilee year with a larger conference and invited well known international forensic specialist Dr David Sweet from Vancouver, Canada, as principal speaker. The theme for the meeting was DVI and the future of forensic dentistry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Nearly 100 delegates from Australia and the Asia-Pacific region

attended. The large Australian contingent contributed to the international mix of the meeting and some of their delegates also contributed to the speaking and workshop programme. Most importantly it reinforced the close bond between the countries and our Societies that will develop further as this century progresses.

The NZSFO works in close association with the NZ Police and Forensic Pathologists throughout New Zealand. While undertaking forensic dental work in New Zealand the NZSFO has been involved in DVI deployments overseas in Thailand following the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami and in Victoria Australia, following the Victoria fires of 2009.

The NZSFO will continue to expand its role in the Asia-Pacific region and develop stronger relationships with forensic and Police agencies both in New Zealand and throughout the world.

The NZSFO has a dedicated website for further information at [www.nzsfo.co.nz](http://www.nzsfo.co.nz)

# Report of INTERPOL meeting May 2010

## The Interpol meeting May 2010, a setback for forensic odontology?

*By Tore Solheim*

Interpol has a special working group on Disaster Victim Identification (DVI). This group has since 1980 arranged meetings almost yearly. The working group has designed forms for identification inclusive dental forms for ante- and post-mortem recording, comparison and conclusion forms. Later a guide to DVI work and a computer program (DVI international from the company Plass Data in Denmark) has been added. The forms and the guide has been redesigned a couple of times. The computer program has also been continually updated. Now version 3.1 is available with the most recent design of the forms.

After the tsunami operation in Thailand great changes were made both to the form and the guide. Unfortunately, too much emphasis was put on the big international tsunami operation. Few disasters are of that magnitude and plans for disaster management do not need to take into consideration the complexity of international cooperation that developed in Thailand. In other words, in my view, too much emphasis was put on both the good and the bad of this particular operation. For instance, many dentists, inexperienced in forensic odontology, were called by various national police authorities to help in the identification work. A number of measures had to be taken to make sure that the correct data were received for accurate comparison. Also everyone had to compromise in the operation. As the main leading post in the international operation was held by Australians, their way of working and the system under which they work prevailed. This was an Anglo-Saxon way and they were supported by other English speaking delegations.

As a consequence of this, the forms were revised in 2008 and a number of major changes passed as they were based on the experiences from Thailand. A number of minor changes were made to the dental forms F1 and F2. I disagree with some of these. Unfortunately, most dentists present at the Interpol meeting, accepted the changes without too much hesitation. I was chairman of a committee examining the changes and suggest further "improvements". The initial changes after the tsunami was introduced without me or anyone else of the Interpol committee had been given the opportunity to comment on them.

I will however not discuss the F1 and F2 forms here. It affects the way of working only to small degree and it will not cause any problem to work with the new forms. Much more important are the changes made to the forms for "Identification report" and the "Comparison report" and that is what I want to focus on here.

### The Comparison report

Let us discuss the form for "Comparison report" first. Before police, forensic pathologist and forensic odontologist has had the opportunity to state the result of their comparison in this form. Now a number of new sciences have been given the opportunity to state the result of their comparison. Then the space has become too small and to solve the problem they have reduced the space for signature from two to one for each speciality. This may be in line with the practice some places. The version of this "Comparison report" from 2002 and the new form for 2008 are shown in **Fig 1**.

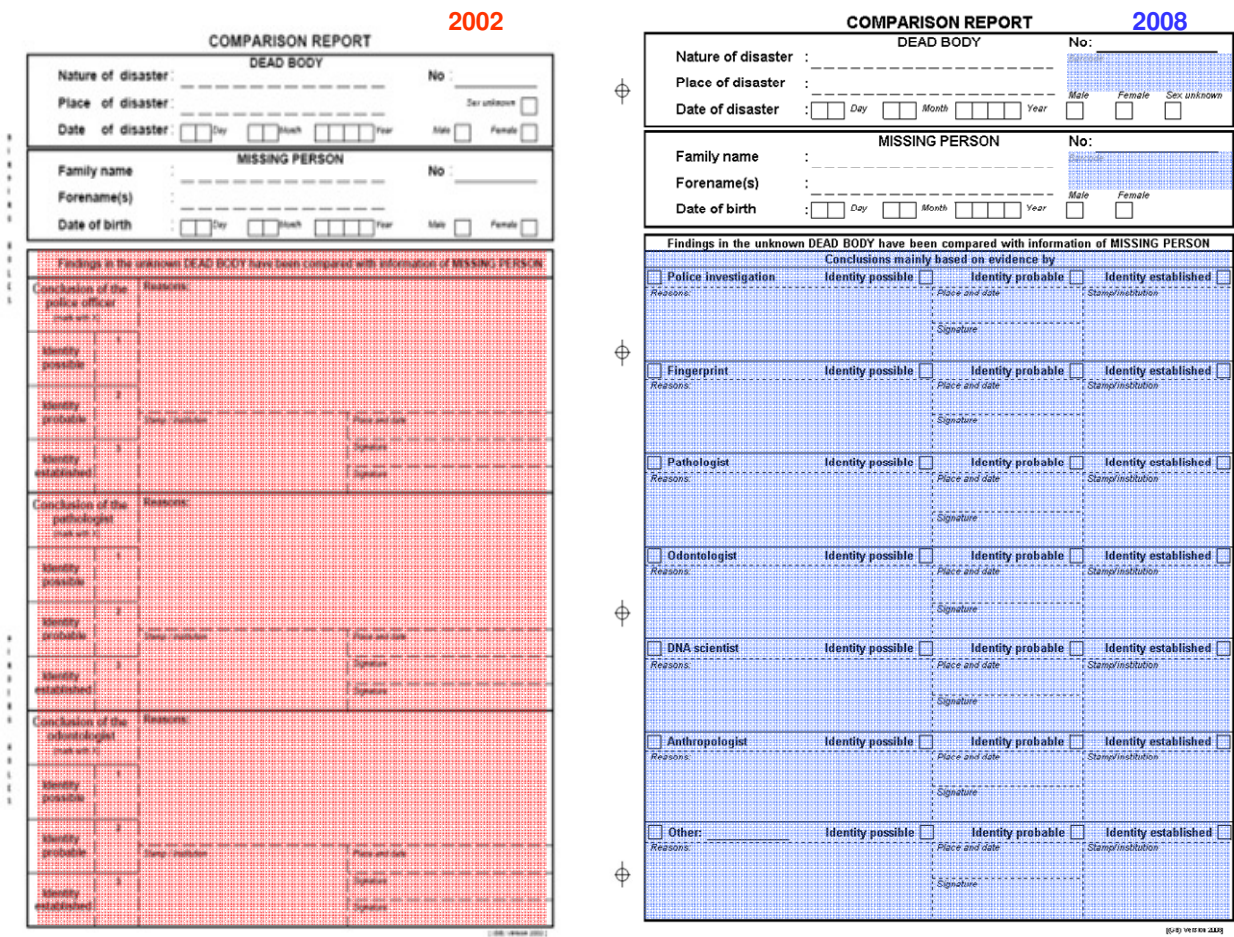


Figure 1. The comparison report version 2002 left, compared with the version 2008, right. The double signature has disappeared in the 2008 version. The space for describing reasons for conclusion has been critically reduced. Signature for comparison by finger print expert, DNA scientist, Anthropologist and Other are added reducing the space for each specialist group.

For quality assurance reason two signatures may be important. It has been practiced in Norway form many years according to the previous Interpol recommendations and we have been very satisfied with this practice. We think that the quality of the final product, the comparison is most important and not the registration on the form of post mortem findings or transferral of data from the record to the ante-mortem form. This double signature is now introduced as an improvement on the F1 and F2 forms for allegedly quality assurance reasons.

In addition to the quality assurance the double signature has given us the possibility to let non members of the Identification commission perform examination and comparison of dental data. By requiring a second signature from a member of the ID-commission we still had control over the results of the comparisons. We have thus succeeded in keeping the practical forensic odontology open to interested colleagues. This has resulted in a number of dentists with some experience in the field and to be able to function satisfactory during larger disasters such as the tsunami for instance. We have thus avoided the kind of exclusivity that we have seen in some other countries, where only one forensic odontologist can do the work and no others are allowed to try. **My recommendation is to revert to the 2002 version of the comparison report.**

### **The identification report**

The form for the "Identification report" has also been changed. The major change is that the signatures of the forensic pathologist and the forensic odontologist have been removed and only one signature is left (Fig 2). The idea by Interpol that identification is teamwork and that each country should have an Identification commission consisting of police, forensic pathologist and forensic odontologist has now been scraped. Obviously when you have a commission all members of the commission must sign for the final result. This is part of the quality assurance for the final identification which has been the principle of Interpol.

**VICTIM IDENTIFICATION REPORT 2002**

DEAD BODY <small>(pink forms enclosed)</small>	
Site of body examination	Body No.
Police Agency Address	Date
Phone	
MISSING PERSON <small>(yellow forms enclosed)</small>	
Family name Forename(s) Street No. Postcode/Town Country	Nationality  Reported missing
Date of birth	Day Month Year
CERTIFICATE OF IDENTIFICATION	
<small>According to the data here enclosed the above dead body has been IDENTIFIED as the above missing person.</small>	
Identification was mainly based on <small>(see comparison report)</small>	Place and date
Police officer responsible <small>Type the name</small>	Signature
Pathologist responsible <small>Type the name</small>	Signature
Odontologist responsible <small>Type the name</small>	Signature
Stamp / Director: Victim Identification	Place and date  Signature
Stamp / Local authority	Place and date  Signature

1006 (rev 002)

**VICTIM IDENTIFICATION REPORT 2008**

DEAD BODY <small>(pink forms enclosed)</small>	
Site of body examination	PM - File
Police Agency Address	Date
Phone	
MISSING PERSON <small>(yellow forms enclosed)</small>	
Family name Forename(s) Street No. Postcode/Town Country	AM - File  Nationality  Reported missing
Date of birth	Day Month Year
CERTIFICATE OF IDENTIFICATION	
<small>According to the data here enclosed the above dead body has been IDENTIFIED as the above missing person.</small>	
Identification was mainly based on <small>(see comparison report)</small>	Place and date
Responsible signatory <small>Type the name</small>	Reviewed by:  Signature
Stamp / Director: Victim Identification	Place and date  Signature
Stamp / Local authority	Place and date  Signature

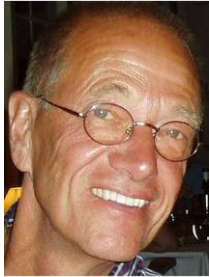
1006 (rev 003)

**Figure 2.** Victim identification report version 2002 (left) and version 2008 (right). The two signatures of forensic odontologist and forensic odontologist have been deleted from the 2002 version. Also the police officer's signature has been changed to Responsible signatory

One may also see that the police officer has been changed to responsible signatory. Thus the idea of the form, that it is the final identification report from the ID-commission to the responsible authority has now been changed to the responsible authority's final identification. Maybe this person never has taken part in the original examination or comparisons. It increases the possibility for wrong identifications and is not at all according to the previous ideas about an ID-commission. **My recommendations are again to revert to the 2002 version of the victim identification report.**

I have talked about this at the Interpol meeting, but have only got little support, and even not support from my fellow forensic odontology colleagues who are affected by these changes. The principles have been widely discussed at Interpol meetings before they were introduced. Of course police today do not know this. However one should think that forensic odontologists would understand.

## X-rays in burn victims



*By Bert Sligenberg, The Netherlands*

It is sometimes not possible to do a physical intra-oral exam of a severely burned human body. To obtain sufficient information for post-mortem identification without physically removing the mandible of the victim is therefore impossible in these cases.



Apart from the severe soft tissue damage and contractures, the teeth of these victims are at times also very brittle and removal of the mandible may result in fracturing of the teeth, which may negatively influence the post-mortem examination.

To overcome at least some aspects of these problems, it is advisable take X-rays before removing the mandible.

In order to get the intra-oral film next to the teeth, soft tissue must be removed first. An easy way to do this is to make an incision along the lingual part of the mandible (see below). The incision must be about 4 cm in length in order to be able to slide the

radiographic film into place. The premolar and molar region of all four quadrants can be X-rayed utilizing this procedure.



After completing the X-ray procedure, the same incision can be lengthened to permit removal of the mandible, or alternatively a second incision can be made at a more suitable location.