

Term forensic odontology

Opinion

We're implementing Science in Forensic. Let us think to ourself, does the term which we quote represent the area & let us make sure of it. It is possible to be different and still be all right. There can be two - or more - answers to the same question, and all can be right. Forensic odontology a branch of forensic medicine delves in the interest of justice. It is associated with examination, handling and presentation of dental evidence to obtain justice in the court of law.¹⁻³ Earlier days the forensic odontologist were involving,

- i. Examination, identification and comparison of bite marks and providing the details in the court of law.
- ii. Identification of unknown bodies through dental records.
- iii. Age estimations of skeletal remains.

Dentition was considered to be unique among the individuals which helped to evolve a new discipline in the field of science i.e. "forensic odontology". It was noted as an identification discipline based upon the recognition of unique features present in person's teeth. It was considered as an substitute for identification when identification by the use of friction ridge skin was not possible. Identification of an individual by dental findings was considered to be most reliable method of identification in manmade or natural disaster. Different structures like enamel, Dentin and cementum and also the dental restorations are considered to be the strongest elements in the human body. They can survive the destructive influences of fire and exposure to the elements. Human permanent dentition consists of 32 teeth and each tooth having five surfaces probability of identification is high especially in fire accidents. In modern days with development of technology application of the knowledge of dental and paradental knowledge helps in solving many legal issues in civil and criminal matters.⁴⁻⁶

Now forensic dentistry involves in,

- i. Identifying a living or deceased individual.
- ii. Bitemark can be used as evidence by identifying, analyzing and comparing dental evidence.
- iii. Proper examination and comparison of wrinkles and grooves on lip can help in identification of an individual.
- iv. Rugae are the most protected wrinkles/anatomical folds within the oral cavity do also help in identification.
- v. Salivary DNA analysis.
- vi. Obtaining Dental evidence from the crime scene and analyzing the same. Evaluation of oro-facial trauma and helping for compensation.
- vii. Professional Negligence in dentistry which could have lead to physical and mental trauma patient.

Various means of identification

- i. Teeth whether natural or artificial
- ii. Bone showing trabecular pattern, tori and osseous anomalies

Volume 2 Issue 3 - 2016

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Received: May 17, 2016 | **Published:** May 19, 2016

- iii. Presence of any foreign body like implants, unretrieved amalgam particles, surgical instruments, bullets, fragments of various origins.
- iv. Paranasal sinus configuration.
- v. Skull sutures.
- vi. Features of lip print and palatal rugae.
- vii. Facial or dental superimposition or approximation
- viii. DNA

Since in the present day's different structures within the oral cavity can be used for establishing the justice the term forensic odontology is not enough to be representing the area. So the terms either forensic stomatology or forensic dentistry. The question is: which will suit the area? Which is a right term? Do it fit?

Acknowledgments

None.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest.

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