

Portuguese militar air crash accident: dental identification of the victims

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ORAL PRESENTATION

J Forensic Odontostomatol
2017 Nov 1; Supp1(35): 68
ISSN :2219-6749

ABSTRACT

Introduction: The positive identification of skeletal by individual dental parameters is one of the objectives of the criminal investigation. The intervention of Forensic Dentistry in some circumstances may represent the only way to obtaining a positive identification of an unidentified bodies. The teeth constitute a scientific method in forensic identification, principally due to the great resistance to the agents who provoke the destruction of the soft tissues in the corpses (putrefaction, traumatic, physical and chemical agents) and to the high morphological variability of the human teeth. The human identification in Forensic Dentistry is made by two ways: comparative and reconstructive. The identification allows determining several parameters of forensic interest: specimen, population affinity, sex, age, stature and individualization's factors. The Forensic Dentistry is one of the most important fields in individual identification, because teeth have less variability in the chronology of events in terms of the reconstructive way. On the other side, in terms of the comparative way, this area is also important, because of the individualization's factors: positive identification in individual cases and in mass disasters. In this forensic case report, air crash accident case, the objective of the medico-legal investigation was a positive identification of the 3 unidentified carbonized corpses found inside the military airplane. The Portuguese law investigation department requested a forensic examination by a Forensic Odontologist for dental positive identification. The objectives were: 1) post mortem reconstruction of the dental status of the victim; 2) obtain the ante mortem information of the presumable victims; 3) comparison of the post mortem information with the ante mortem information, for a positive identification of the presumable 3 victims. **Materials and methods:** in this field of dental investigation, the guidelines of the International Organization of Forensic Odontology were used for reconstruction of the post mortem dental profile, to register ante mortem information of the presumable victims and to compared for individualized dental factors, by using Interpol DVI Forms dental post mortem and ante mortem forms.

Results: the 3 carbonized unidentified victims were positive identified where it was established the identity by more than 12 individual dental characteristics in less than 24 hours.

Discussion and Conclusion: the Forensic Dentistry is a very important and simple field for individual identification of unidentified corpses in a short period of time to deliver the corpses to the family.