

Torture victims: an Italian sample study and forensic issues

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POSTER PRESENTATION
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J Forensic Odontostomatol
2017 Nov 1; Supp1(35): 80
ISSN :2219-6749

ABSTRACT

The irregular immigration towards European Countries is a well known phenomenon that has dramatically increased over the last few years. Consequently, several legal-medical issues have also been on the rise. Forensic investigations are often required by institutions responsible for releasing asylum and inter/national protection. Forensic and medico-legal experts are called to face with cases of irregular immigration for two main and important questions: age estimation in unaccompanied minors and medical investigation in case of declared to be victim of torture or violence. In Florence, a specific medico-legal service has been activated in 2014 at the Local Medico-Legal Service of National Health System for providing medico-legal reports in case of alleged tortures or violence. The medico-legal protocol for torture ascertainment, the epidemiological data resulted from about 120 reports will be presented and discussed with particular attention paid to the victim's history and clinical signs emerged during the interview and the visit. Some specific physical consequences and signs, especially those affecting the maxillofacial and oral areas will be discussed for the relevant role that a forensic odontologist can assume in such specific ascertainment. The experience highlights the difficulties of these medico-legal assessments which link both the necessary multidisciplinary nature and legal medical or forensic methodology which requires the practitioners to undergo special training based on international protocols