DENTAL ASPECTS OF CRANIOFACIAL SUPERIMPOSITION – THE INTERNATIONAL MEPROCS PROJECT

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Craniofacial Superimposition is a scientific process, where an image of a missing person is overlaid onto an image of a skull for identification purposes. The scientific background of this technique is based on the premise that there is a strong relationship between the morphology of the facial skull and the soft tissue features of the human face. The reliability of this technique is increased considerable by the presence of teeth in the antemortem photograph and in the skull which can be superimposed, their morphology, dimensions and spatial relationships serving as guidelines.

Cranial superimposition has been used successfully in missing persons cases as well as in mass casualty incidents like the Thai Tsunami. The reliance on cranial superimposition for identification of human remains varies considerably worldwide. While some investigators rely predominantly on this technique for positive, others tend to consider skull-photo superimposition as a good technique to provide only exclusion of identification. The technological aspects of cranial superimposition have evolved considerably since first reported in 1937. The new methodologies and protocols of forensic identification by craniofacial superimposition (MEPROCS) is an FP7 supported project aimed to create a common EU protocol on the implementation of the technique, relying mostly on fully automatic procedures. The objective of this poster is to present the advantages of including dental information in craniofacial superimposition as an identification technique within the realm of forensic anthropology and odontology.