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EDITORIAL

The International Congress of IOFOS, organized by IOFOS and the Department of Health Sciences of the University of Florence, has been held in August, 29-31 at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Firenze. More than 200 participants, coming from 40 countries, attended the 19 scientific sessions which were dedicated to all the areas of education, qualification and practice in forensic odontology. The scientific program was fostered by 118 presentations of researchers, forensic odontologists and forensic experts coming from all around the world. A piece of knowledge was built through the presentations of the latest advancements in the main areas of forensic odontology, followed by the extensive and deep discussions which characterized all the sessions. Thereby prominent opinions and different experiences have been shared and compared between the attendees and more than 140 authors and 39 chair people, included deans at Dental School, University professors, presidents and board members of national and international Associations of Forensic Odontology, chairs and heads of forensic odontology groups, sections or services of Interpol, national polices or military entities, judges, lawyers, experienced private practitioners. The Congress Abstract Book reports the abstracts of oral and poster presentations, grouped per main area so that in the first part the presentations that focused on the different education of FOD (forensic odontologist) are gathered from country to country and the qualification required in different fields of practice. Comparing qualification and accreditation of forensic odontologists in the numerous intervened countries, a serious step ahead was made towards internationally accepted standards in forensic odontology practice and a continuation of quality assurance process that IOFOS has been pursuing in the last decades. Contributions dealing with ethics, malpractice, litigation and insurance report extensive national experiences and offer highly qualified analysis in these areas. Meanwhile demonstrating Forensic Odontology and FOD activity cannot be deemed as limited to dental identification, being most FODs expert in dental ethics and medico-legal issues of dental practice. Body identification, age estimation and bite mark confirmed to be pillar topics of Forensic Odontology, for which the conference received, as expected, numerous, highly qualified presentations of the most active research groups as well as the most accredited and internationally renowned forensic odontologists. The latest advancements of dental methods, oral autopsy techniques and technologies experimented and presented demonstrate that the body identification procedure based on dental evidence, beyond its traditional importance, to be very active and ever more reliable and suitable in the daily forensic practice. Presentations dealing with age estimation for sub-adults, and especially those reporting results of studies based on very large and multiethnic samples, proved that consistent evidence is emerging in this field of forensic odontology. The legal and the ethical issues connected with age estimation in living subjects have been deepened and new methods for age estimation in adults have been proposed as well. Sessions dedicated to bite mark faced the most questioned aspects of this area of identification by dental means, being bite mark evidence no more admitted in some Courts or

resulted in contrast with other evidence (DNA, i.e.). An accurate selection of cases with significant evidentiary value, a scientific approach and the involvement of highly qualified and experienced forensic odontologists, emerged as crucial elements of this challenging field. Forensic odontologists affiliated with the IOFOS are regularly recruited during mass disasters where they take part in connection with Interpol DVI, international institutions or agencies, national and local governments, and military entities. Therefore they gain enduring and extensive experience in mass-disaster interventions. Some important lessons have been reported and learned through which the DVI procedure and the approach can be reviewed and implemented.

The participation to the conference of pathologists, legal-medicine specialists, lawyers, DNA experts, as well as connections with other prominent international associations officially intervened to the congress (IAFS, IALM and FOD Working Group of DVI Interpol) demonstrate that Forensic Odontology as a discipline, and IOFOS as a world organization, maintain strong and lively contacts with other forensic disciplines and organizations.

IOFOS represents the largest international community of forensic odontology and milestones have been set by looking toward new advancements and improvements in the future, thanks to highly qualified presentations and valuable experiences of forensic odontologists and experts intervened to the IOFOS Congress 2013.

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