Editorial

Scope of Forensic Odontology

Forensic dentistry deals with the art and science of dentistry in the identification of a person for the purpose of law (Kaiser and Neilson 1960). The word "forensic" is derived from the Latin word "forensic" which means "before the forum."

Thirty-two teeth with five clinical surfaces offer 1.8 billion combinations, and thus forensic odontology links law with dentistry, and it is that branch of dentistry which, in the interest of justice, deals with the proper handling and examination of dental evidence, and with the proper evaluation and presentation of dental findings.

Paul Revere who had placed an ivory restoration in Joseph Warren's mouth and this later helped him to successfully identify the restoration he had prepared and thereby Joseph Warren. This is the first recorded instance wherein a dentist is credited with reporting a postmortem identification.

Dr. Oscar Amoebda is known as the Father of Forensic Odontology and had established the first exclusive Department of Forensic Odontology in the world was set up in Japan almost 50 years ago in Tokyo Dental College. Undergraduate education for forensic odontology was initially encouraged in the West in the 1960s. International Organization for Forensic Odonto-Stomatology was begun in 1972, and this led to the initiation of Indian Association of Forensic Odontology in 2000.

All dental surgeons, especially the pedodontists invariably play a significant role as forensic odontologist in the identification of child abuse (physical, emotional, and sexual abuse) based on the extraoral and intraoral findings such as lacerations, bruise, bite marks on skin and teeth fracture, and thermal or electrical burns.

Forensic odontologists play a vital role not only in age and sex determination but also in his role in the identification of an unknown deceased person in mass disaster identification of the dead bodies or remains of the dead body is very significant.

Recently, forensic odontologists are technically advanced and are involved in digital bite marks and lip print analysis and are also involved in the implementation of various advanced technologies to prove the uniqueness of stomatological structures such as tooth prints, rugae, and lip prints as biometric tools.

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