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Editorial

Infallible Concepts of Lip Prints

Study of lip prints is called cheiloscopy and it dates back to 1902. Initially, the furrows and grooves in lips are called lip prints and studies proved that there are different patterns of lip prints in different parts of lips.

Many researchers involved in cheiloscopy had devised their own classification based on the morphological differentiation of furrows and grooves in the lips. Although there were few classifications, the classification devised by Yasuo Tsuchiashi was followed by many researchers and proved that all the five types described by the author were seen in most of the lip prints taken in different populations.

Various researchers had followed the classification devised by Yasuo Tsuchiashi for evaluating the prevalence of various types of lip prints among different sections of lips in both males and females.

The most common methods of lip print collection used in all the previous studies are lipstick and cellophane tape or tracing paper. Very few studies had involved in lip print collection using ink and few studies had attempted collecting lip prints in glass plates.

Researchers have attempted to trace latent lip prints from materials such as drinking glass, doors, and cigarette butts, using fingerprint tracing powders such as aluminum, magnetic powders, and dyes such as fluorescent and Nile red inks.

Lip print analysis is mostly done using magnifying glass, and recent past studies have concentrated in digitalizing the lip prints for more detailed and accurate analysis in different parts of the upper and lower lip as there are different types of lip prints in different parts of the lips.

Furrows, ridges, valleys, and grooves are there in all prints such as fingerprint, lip print, and palmar and plantar prints. As age advances, more number of scars is also evident in all these anatomical regions.

The ridges and minutiae points which mark the differentiating areas of each ridge in fingerprints account for infallibility and these characteristic points have been successfully proved to be unique in all individuals. Hence, the ridges present in all these prints account for infallibility and not the scars as ridges are permanent anatomical structures while scars are not persistent and it is proved that it increases with age.

These ridges and minutiae points are well established in fingerprints to prove the infallible characteristic of fingerprints.

There are few studies attempted by researchers mainly in the field of engineering attempting to evaluate the biometric application of lip prints by creating an algorithm, but no study has been attempted to devise a device for lip print recognition and identification. The lacunae in cheiloscopy research is that researchers have not differentiated ridges, furrows and grooves as clearly explained in dermatoglyphics by finger print experts.

The earlier classification of lip prints is based on the scars and not on the ridges. As the ridges in palmar and plantar prints account for infallibility, the ridges in lip prints need to be identified and evaluated further to find any pattern of ridges such as the whorl, arch, and loop patterns seen in fingerprints. There may be subclassifications also in each pattern, which can be studied only if the main types of ridge pattern in lip prints are established.

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Access this article online

Quick Response Code:

Website: www.ijofo.org

DOI: 10.4103/2542-5013.194274

How to cite this article: Uma Maheshwari TN. Infallible concepts of lip prints. Int J Forensic Odontol 2016;1:25.