

Comment Submission Deadline: 12-Sep-22

Title of Document: ASB Standard 147, Standard for Analyzing Skeletal Trauma in Forensic Anthropology

#	Section	Type of Comment (E-Editorial, T-Technical)	Comments	Proposed Resolution	Final Resolution
4	3.14	T	"Trauma interpretation" now is defined as "Explanation [in lieu of opinion] regarding the mechanism of, timing, direction of impact(s) or minimum number of impacts associated with skeletal defect(s) based on quantitative and/or qualitative observations." The phrase "based on ... observations" indicates that the opinion on the truth, falsity, or probability of an inference being drawn from the data. Interpretation should at least include the possibility of describing the strength of the evidence in favor of the inference rather than purporting to explain the truth, falsity, or probability or the conclusion itself. In addition, if the explanation-statement is an assertion that the hypothesis about what happened is true or false (either categorically or to some probability), it is not just based on the data, but on a prior probability for the hypothesis as well.	Delete "based on ..."	Accept with Modification (Definition of Trauma Interpretation): "Explanation regarding the mechanism, timing, direction of impact(s), and/or minimum number of impacts associated with skeletal defect(s) using quantitative and/or qualitative evidence."
5	3.15	T	The new definition of "trauma mechanism" is "The classification of an extrinsic factor that produces a skeletal defect." But "classification" is the act or process of classifying or a systematic arrangement in groups or categories according to established criteria. Sorting and labelling things is not a mechanism.	Define "trauma mechanism" as "underlying processes involved in or responsible for the trauma" or "external factors that produce a skeletal defect."	Reject (comment does not pertain to the redline document)
9	4.1	T	The revised sentences under trauma methods implies that trauma documentation should be adequate for independent verification, yet photographs are not included in the list of methods in the previous sentence. This is common in peer reviews and second opinions (court). I am aware of a recent Daubert Hearing specific to this question, where the SWGANATH document was brought up to argue that no opinions could be rendered from photographs as it was not mentioned anywhere. Recommend to either include photographs in the list or see proposed sentence. If it is too late for such a revision, the committee feels that the second line already covers this, or this is best addressed elsewhere, I understand, but wanted to raise the issue.	Assessment of trauma from photographs is acceptable during case reviews, but the reviewer should clearly indicate the limitations of their assessment based on the materials available for review and refrain from drawing conclusions on items not well-documented.	Accept with Modification: "When possible, skeletal trauma examination shall be based on gross, microscopic, radiographic, photographic, and/or other observations and analyzed using peer reviewed published methods."
1	4.1	T	The redlined version notes that only "scientifically validated" methods should be used but does not explain what constitutes scientific validation.	Add that a scientifically validated method means one that has been subject to validation studies such that an error rate (the uncertainty of the method's estimates) can be estimated.	Accept with Modification: "When possible, skeletal trauma examination shall be based on gross, microscopic, radiographic, photographic, and/or other observations and analyzed using peer reviewed published methods."
2	4.3.4	T	Our previous comment was that the notation "The type and spatial distribution of sharp force trauma may indicate dismemberment" does not belong in this standard because it does not indicate any action or prohibition to the practitioner, not does it give meaningful guidance to a practitioner about what type and spatial distribution of sharp force indicates dismemberment. The redlined version has restated this, saying "dismemberment should be considered" when interpreting sharp force trauma. The concern is still present.	Remove	Reject with modification: "Dismemberment should be considered when interpreting sharp force trauma, particularly if the extremities and/or head are affected."
8	5	T	New sentences are "Blasts/explosive events often cause blunt (including concussive) and projectile trauma to the body. When the trauma pattern and circumstantial information are consistent with a blast event, the trauma mechanism should be classified as "blast trauma." The phrase "circumstantial information" invites the anthropologist to conclude that a pattern is the result of "blast trauma" primarily (or perhaps exclusively) on the basis of non-anthropological evidence.	A "sequential unmasking" process of unmasking should be required to clarify the extent to which the classification is based on anthropological expertise as opposed to other information.	Accept with Modification: (Section 5): "When the trauma pattern is consistent with a blast event, the trauma mechanism should be classified as "blast trauma."