



### **D39 The Current Status of the ABMDI Certified Medicolegal Death Investigator in the United States**

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After attending this presentation, attendees will show the affect of ABMDI certification for medicolegal death investigators. This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by providing an understanding of the current status of the ABMDI certified medicolegal death investigator in the United States. The participant will be able to discern the affect of ABMDI certification on the job status for medicolegal death investigators and insight into future employment trends.

The creation of the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators (ABMDI) in 1998 established for the first time standardized criteria for the profession of medicolegal death investigation in the United States. Since 1998, over 700 individuals have met the criteria established by the ABMDI Board and Advisory Council to become Registered Medicolegal Death Investigators. The purpose of this study was to develop a profile of the current status of certified medicolegal death investigator, their professional responsibilities, and work environment, potential benefits of certification, and also to provide insight into the future direction of the profession.

Beginning in the fall of 2004, a national survey instrument was developed by the ABMDI to collect data pursuant to the study's objectives. The survey consisted of a number of questions in the following categories: Demographic Information including job title, years experience and salary; Employment Status, including caseload and case types investigated; Case Management Activities including documentation, standards followed and technology used to conduct investigations, as well as various professional job requirements, such as prerequisite skill requirements for employment, professional development activities, continuing education, and in-services to maintain employment and/or take advantage of promotion opportunities. In addition, questions were posed to determine if any interagency (law enforcement) interactions had changed since the achievement of certification.

The survey population consisted of each certified member of the ABMDI, both registry (Diplomats) and board certified (Fellow) levels. Since all members were included in the survey, no sampling methodology was employed. The survey procedures included pre-survey mail out notifications, followed by both hardcopy and electronic survey deployment via the U.S. mail and the Internet to all members. Non-respondent follow-up consisted of notification and re-deployment of the survey. The nonrespondent follow-up process was repeated four times, once every 14 days, after which telephone follow-up of all non-respondents was conducted to ensure the highest response rate possible.

The results of the survey will establish a benchmark for the profession of medicolegal death investigation; its current status and future viability. All major data categories will be correlated to the achievement of the ABMDI certification in attempts to validate the efficacy of certification to the population of medicolegal investigators in the United States. Results will be useful for educational program planners at agencies employing medicolegal death investigators, educational institutions preparing medicolegal investigators, and associations providing in-service, training or continuing education activities for the next generation of medicolegal death investigator, as well as current investigators seeking information about the advancement within the profession and individuals contemplating career opportunities in the field of medicolegal death investigation.

#### **Medicolegal Death Investigator, Standardization, Employment**