



F4 Questionable Bite Mark Demographics

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The goal of this presentation is to motivate investigation and discussion regarding the disparity in demographic reporting of the number of bite marks.

This presentation will impact the forensic community by inspiring different agencies to look into a question of possible missed evidence.

Incidental to writing an article to help hospital pathologists distinguish between bite marks and other pattern injuries, it became obvious there was a wide variation in the number of cases reported in jurisdictions within the United States and Canada. Consideration was given to the following causes:

- lack of education and information
- financial restrictions or insufficient funding
- lack of interest

In order to establish a baseline of bite marks seen and/or recognized, the members of the American Board of Forensic Odontologists were surveyed. At the end of 2004, information was compiled by sending a survey through email requesting amounts of pattern injuries referred and bite marks seen in 2002 and again in 2003. Thirty-one members replied. A second survey slightly modified, was handed to members during the 2005 AAFS Conference in New Orleans, this time inquiring about the number of pattern injuries seen from 2002-2004 and number of bite marks seen from 2002-2004. The latter survey received forty-one responders, with some members having answered both of the solicitations. It must be noted that not all states were represented.

Early responses were unremarkable; most replies were below 5 for pattern injuries and for bite marks discerned. However, 9 odontologists reported a range of bite marks seen from 10288. This same group reported pattern injuries from 02160. The odontologists who replied were from 27 unique states and one from Canada.

This poster presentation is intended to motivate further investigation and stimulate discussion in order to determine why such a large disparity exists in the demographics.

Bite Marks, Demographics, Pattern Injuries