F17 WinID Expansion as an Aid to Identification in Multiple Fatality Incidents

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand the expansion of the WinID database to include identifiers in addition to dental that will improve efficiency and decrease workload of forensic investigators in Multiple Fatality Incidents.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by introducing WinID with an expanded database that will integrate identifying terms into one web based program. This will increase efficiency and decrease the workload for forensic investigators in Multiple Fatality Incidents. In addition, the program will be available to investigators from any location via the Internet.

The objective of this presentation is to 1) assess the impact of WinID's program expansion in Multiple Fatality Incidents (MFI's) via a survey of responders to previous MFI's, and 2) compile a comprehensive list of terms for identification to be incorporated into the WinID database to aid in identification efforts in MFI's.

A survey was taken of responders to previous MFI's requesting their input on the benefit of a program integrating all identifiers. This survey was conducted via the Internet. Identification terms were gleaned from existing forms used for this purpose, i.e., Victim Identification Profile (VIP), National Crime Information Center Missing Person Data Collection Entry Guide, and Interpol Victim Identification Form as well as terms added by the author.

Managing a Multiple Fatality Incident requires the collection of a large amount of antemortem and postmortem data. Organizing, accessing, analyzing, and making this data useful are challenges for forensic personnel. The expectation of positive identification of the victims is high. Scientific identification is typically based on one or more of four methods: dental, DNA, fingerprint and medically documented biological characteristics. Antemortem data that do not fall within these methods has the potential to be less useful, particularly in cultures that require identification to be scientifically based. Not every culture demands that a scientific standard be met for identification. A database that includes as many identifiers as possible would allow for applications in third world countries where the identification standards are different than those of the United States and may be based solely on personal effects or biological characteristics such as hair or eye color. The collection of antemortem data that includes only the most effective and most used parameters is becoming more of a concern. Misinterpretation of terminology by both interviewer and interviewee can hinder the identification process as well. Prior incidents have been worked using two well known but different software systems that are written in incompatible languages. WinID was designed to manage dental antemortem and postmortem data while VIP manages broader biological identifiers as well as personal effects. This arrangement requires investigators to be proficient in two different programs to access all identifying data on an individual case. Surveys of responders to previous MFI's indicate that the integration of all antemortem and postmortem data would improve efficiency and decrease the workload of forensic investigators. This paper details a proposed single integrated web based software system, WinID that includes identifiers gleaned from forms already in use. The program will be written in ASP.net 2.0. The data will be formatted in Extensible Markup Language (XML). The XML format allows data to be accessed by programs using incompatible languages. It also allows for easy expansion and revision of terminology in the database if necessary. A single software system, an expanded version of WinID, would allow all investigators access to all data to improve efficiency in the identification of victims. In addition, having WinID web based allows easy access to the program online. The availability of the program online would allow for access by investigators from any location. This includes investigators onsite at the disaster as well as those off site that may be interviewing family members.

Forensic Odontology, WinID, Multiple Fatality Incidents

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