



F30 The State of the Missing/Unidentified Persons Today and How Forensic Dentists Can Help With Closure

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The goal of our study and presentation is to make all agencies involved in the identification of Missing and Unidentified individuals aware of the current changes implemented by the National Crime Information Center. In addition, we would like to review new developments relating to Missing and Unidentified Persons that have occurred in general.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by helping provide closure for the friends and families of Missing and Unidentified Persons.

The NCIC is a nationwide computerized information system available to law enforcement and criminal justice agencies. It was formed in conjunction with the International Association Chiefs of Police and the FBI in 1967. The system started with the Missing Article File, expanding to include the Missing Person File in 1975 and the addition of the Unidentified Person File in 1983. It has had shared management between the FBI, State and other Federal Criminal Agencies. The FBI has been the host computer for 50 states, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, Canada and Interpol. Even so, it has been difficult for each state to collect information and to have the ability to share information. The Missing Person File and the Unidentified Person File has been hampered by the use of identifiers that related more to physical characteristics (hair, eye color, etc.) rather than something more stable like dental characteristics. Additional hindrances to the system included the failure to collect the necessary personal information, such as dental records, at the law enforcement level. A June 2007 statistical report from CJIS indicates that the number of Missing Person Files with dental records collected averaged less than 5% for the majority of states. Ten states had less than 1% of their missing persons cases with dental records submitted. Recently, significant changes have been implemented. The revised Unidentified and Missing Persons Data Collection Entry Guides (instituted in 02/2006) are simpler and easier to understand and are based on an adaptation of the WinID program. However, trained individuals are still needed to complete the revised forms. The investigation showed not all counties in New York were using the updated forms and not all individuals filing the forms were trained. With the help of the FBI and fellow members of the ABFO, reasons why were sought to discover what was occurring in the rest of the 50 states. All state clearinghouses were surveyed. The results of the experiences and survey will be presented in the hopes of making all agencies more knowledgeable of the tools available to them in helping to provide closure for the many family and friends of the Missing and Unidentified.

A National Dental Image Repository (NDIR) is being established at this time. It will provide a place for law enforcement to post dental images related to the missing and unidentified on the web. The NDIR is composed of experienced dentists qualified to make comparisons and are available for consultation to all law enforcement agencies. The dentists are trained to use the correct coding. Also updated coding forms will be available online. The NDIR is placed on Law Enforcement Online or LEO. This system operates 24/7 and is restricted to law enforcement, criminal justice or public safety agencies. Case information will be submitted and will be reviewed by a group of ABFO odontologists and approved. Once approved the information is posted by NCIC number on LEO in a .PDF format (portable document form).

Other new developments now include the dissolution of the National Center for Missing Adults (even though 3% of the missing are less than 18- years-old) due to lack of funds.

On July 2, 2007 the Justice Department launched the National Missing and Unidentified Persons Initiative (NAMUS). This will be an additional repository of relevant information for medical examiners, coroners, victim advocates, law enforcement agencies, and the general public to access and search for records of missing persons and unidentified human remains to attempt to solve cases. Exactly how this will work with other agencies is not clear at this writing.

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