



A135 Management in the Search, Recovery, and Analysis of Skeletal Remains in Colombia

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After attending this presentation, attendees will have an insight on the search, recovery, and processing of the skeletal remains found as a result of information obtained from defendants who enter into plea agreements with the government in exchange for information on their victims, as part of the new Law of Justice and Peace. The most relevant factors involved in the successful identification of the victims of the Colombian domestic conflict will be described, together with some of the resulting challenges.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by explaining the complexity of recovering decomposed remains. Most of these remains are severely deteriorated by external agents. The remains are analyzed by a multidisciplinary forensic team, made up of various professionals, i.e., medical examiners, forensic anthropologists, forensic odontologists, forensic DNA experts, and facial reconstruction experts. Their experience and expertise has contributed to the determination of the cause, manner, and form of death, as well as to the estimation of age, sex, race, and stature. These are the factors taken into account to make a positive identification of the victims.

When the new law became effective, both the human and technical infrastructure of the Technical Investigation Corp (CTI) of the Attorney General's Office were insufficient to respond to the enormous amount of field recovery requests. A large number of skeletal remains were found on the basis of the information obtained. Consequently, CTI facilities and capabilities had to be expanded by implementing new state-of-the-art technologies and hiring highly qualified staff from the technical and humane standpoints.

Once the remains are found, the primary goal is to ensure reliable and high quality results in the analysis of the remains recovered by the above mentioned multidisciplinary teams. The grief of the victim's family members is somewhat mitigated if positive identification is accomplished and the skeletal remains are returned to the families for them to give proper burial to their loved ones.

Management, Multidisciplinary Teams, Skeletal Remains