F50 Report on Results of Questionnaire of American Society of Forensic Odontology Members

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After attending this presentation, attendees will learn how members of the American Society of Forensic Odontology responded to a questionnaire about their participation in various aspects of forensic dentistry.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by reporting results for an online survey performed in order to learn how our colleagues are providing forensic odontology services.

Introduction: The purpose of this survey was to determine the activities of American forensic dentists in key areas of forensic odontology such as human identification, bitemark analysis, civil litigation cases, and age estimation.

Materials and Methods*:* Members of the American Society of Forensic Odontology who are forensic dentists practicing in the United States were surveyed in 2009 using Surveymonkey.com, a commercial website for survey deployment. Analysis: participants were categorized by whether members were board certified, geographic region of practice in the U.S., year of graduation from dental school, and year of board certification. Responders who did not specify a home state were excluded from additional analysis. Outcome variables of interest were the mean number of identification cases, bitemark cases, civil litigation cases and the number of age determination cases performed in the previous twelve months and in the past five years. Identification cases were further divided into those in which the responder performed the resections, those in which medical examiners (or technicians) performed resections, and those in which no resection was done. $p<.05$ indicates a statistically significant difference in means between groups.

Results: There were 135 respondents to our survey. Sixteen were diplomates of the American Board of Forensic Odontology, 116 were not board certified; 3 did not answer. 26 responders were board eligible, 96 were not and 13 did not answer. 33 responders were from the Northeast United States, 20 from the Midwest, 17 from the Southeast, nine from the Midsouth, and 14 from the West. Forty-two gave no home state. There were 18 responders who graduated from dental school from 1990-2009, 36 from 1980-1989, 38 from 1970-1979, and 14 prior to 1970, with 29 non-responders.

The mean number of identification cases performed in the previous five years for board certified responders was 134.75 (n=15) and 30.09 (n=75) for non-certified forensic dentists ($p<.05$). Regarding identification cases in the last 12 months, the means were 32.87 (n=15) for board-certified respondents and 6.00 (n=76) for non-certified ($p<.05$). The mean number of bitemark cases performed in the last five years was 3.73 (n=15) for board certified dentists and 1.22 (n=74) for non-certified ($p<.05$). In the previous12 months, the means were 2.07 (n=15) and .43 (n=74)($p<.05$). The mean number of civil liability cases in the last five years for board certified forensic dentists was 6.40 (n=15) and 2.40 (n=75). For the previous year, the means were 2.00 (n=15) and 0.51 (n=75) cases. For age estimation cases done in the previous 5 years, the mean for board certified dentists was 26.00 (n=14) and 2.257 (n=72) for non-certified ($p<.05$). For age estimations made during the prior year, means were 27.29 (n=14) for board certified and 0.44 (n=73) for non- certified forensic dentists ($p<.05$).

More detailed statistics and analyses as a basis for subsequent reports will be presented. This information as to what, how and where our work is being accomplished will hopefully be useful to ourselves and to other forensic professionals in determining the future directions of forensic odontology.

Survey, Odontology, Report

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