



## Pathology Biology Section – 2011

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### **G92 Mass Fatality Management: A Multi- National Perspective**

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand the challenges faced a multi-national recovery and identification effort.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by presenting lessons learned from the field in a multi-national mass fatalities incident, which can be applied to a future incidence response.

In response to the Haiti Earthquake, several international organizations responded to assist in fatality management and repatriation of non-Haitian human remains. Each of the fatality management and response organizations was dispatched by a governmental agency, but with little coordination between the organizations. Initially, the prohibitive conditions of an entire Haitian infrastructure in disarray and the extreme difficulty of providing for the logistical requirements of supporting a deployable morgue unit without local support was the primary factor limiting human identification efforts. However, difficulty in determining jurisdiction and logistics of repatriation of multi-national citizens became one of the primary difficulties in the response effort. A major complexity in the recovery and victim identification of foreign nationals was the number of independent countries on the ground attempting to identify their own citizens for repatriation. Another major factor was the actual recovery of the victims that were buried under tons of rubble, which were a safety hazard for recovery personnel.

Not only was the logistical aspect of this operation complex, but the recovery and initial identification of the multi-national victims was extremely difficult. This is the first global mass fatality incident where an attempt had to be made to determine the nationality of the victims prior to recovery to ensure accurate identification, repatriation and disposition of the remains. The coordination of antemortem biological information was crucial to this effort and it took a great deal of coordination between countries.

This presentation will discuss how to more effectively coordinate a mass fatality response in the event of future disasters involving multi- national populations from multiple countries with varying capabilities for fatality response as well as the complexity of victim identification in this scenario.

**Fatality Management, Mass Disaster, Mortuary Operations**