



Odontology Section - 2016

G56 Manipulation of Forensic Experts — Altering the Course of Criminal Justice in Hungary

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After attending this presentation, attendees will better understand the importance of ensuring the authenticity of forensic reports in determining the fate of criminal investigations, particularly in cases involving bitemark analysis. Forensic dentists serving as experts are often pressured, by suspects and officials alike, to modify their findings to the advantage of the parties involved.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by highlighting that their impartial and strictly objective standards are never to be compromised, under any circumstances, no matter how much pressure is exerted to bend the truth.

Despite its long history in educational and theoretical fields in Hungary, human bitemark analysis is increasingly integrated into police investigation work today. Since 2008, continuous media campaigns and educational programs put into place for the purpose of training Hungarian crime scene technicians have helped raise awareness of the importance of bitemark analysis among the police and the general public, resulting in the reporting of several bitemark cases within a short span of time. Almost all private and public television channels in Hungary covered reports and documentaries on bitemarks, bitemark analysis, implications in solving criminal cases, and educating the public of its value in proving a suspect's guilt or innocence.

In two separate cases, a forensic odontologist was approached and prompted to alter his findings in order to exonerate the suspects. One case involved a husband who claimed he was bitten by a drunk friend at a bachelor party, whereas his wife suspected the bitemark was acquired while engaging in a sexual affair. Another case involved a dog owner fighting to keep her dog from being put to sleep, claiming the dog had only scratched when in fact he had bitten his victim in a vicious attack. Both clients retracted their request for bitemark analysis, realizing that the forensic expert would not be manipulated and the reports would be objective and not falsely altered for their benefit.

In conclusion, even though massive strides have been made in the advancement of forensic science in Hungary, corruption on the part of a few who try to take advantage still poses a threat to justice. The importance of safeguarding accurate forensic evidence goes hand-in-hand with honesty and the dedication of experts who engage in the admirable work of public service in upholding the highest standards of ethics, truth, and justice.

Manipulation, Guilt, Innocence