



I-O-F-O-S

NEWSLETTER

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR FORENSIC ODONTO-STOMATOLOGY



Volume 45, Issue 2, December 2023

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IMPRESSUM

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It is a privilege to be appointed as Editor, IOFOS Newsletter. And these are big shoes to fill – literally and figuratively. The former editor, Marin Vodanović has drastically raised the bar of the look and feel of the biannual newsletter of the IOFOS. As a reader, I have been a ‘fan’ and so you see almost no change to the layout and look. But of course, the content is curated by me in consultation with our new President, Cristiana Palmela Pereira. So, my expectation is that this newsletter will be ‘new wine in old bottle’.

This issue has important information which the President wished to convey, so we have not gone the traditional route of soliciting articles from IOFOS members/member-societies, nor from other contributors. Instead, you will see write-ups from a variety of dental and forensic conferences/meetings from around the world, and salient information on just completed and upcoming educational programmes of the IOFOS.

President Cristiana Palmela Pereira was elected in the IOFOS General Assembly in Dubrovnik, Croatia, in September 2023. The IOFOS Congress – in this organisation’s 50th year – was well-conducted and highly successful. As predicted by Marin Vodanović in his June 2023 editorial, the congress was

“an opportunity to meet colleagues, learn, network, plan new collaborations and elect a new IOFOS leadership in the coming period”. Credit to immediate past President, Hrvoje Brkić and his team for its excellent conduct. The new President has appointed him and another past President, Vilma Pinchi, to

continue serving on the Executive Board. And they have all written articles for this issue of the newsletter, as has Vice President Ricardo Henrique Alves da Silva. IOFOS Secretary Marin Vodanović and Webmaster Stefano Garatti have brought in

their technical expertise. I am grateful to them all for their trust, timely support, contribution and direction.

In addition, we have contributions of two more past Presidents of IOFOS – Tore Solheim and Eddy De Valck; a contribution from Selina Leow, a report by Raji Viola Solomon and Jayasankar Pillai, and an article jointly prepared by nine young PhD scholars completes this issue. My thanks to them all for their time and effort.

From this collaborative effort, we have tried to make important information regarding forensic dentistry available to colleagues globally through this newsletter.

As customary, I invite you to share your forensic odontology experience with the IOFOS community by preparing



meeting reports and other texts. Your contributions for the next issue of the IOFOS newsletter should be emailed by 15 May, 2024. They should be in MS Word (max. two pages, 700 words and up to two images), with affiliation data of the author(s). More details are available below in the Instruction for Authors.

And lastly, it is festive season for about a third of the world's population. So, here's wishing all of you celebrating, a Happy Christmas, happy holidays and a prosperous 2024!

Sincerely,

Ashith B. Acharya

Instruction for Authors

IOFOS newsletter is published biannually in June and December. Contributions should be sent by e-mail to news1-editor@iofos.eu not later than 15 days before the first day of the month of publication. All contributions should be in English as Microsoft Word documents (max. two pages). Do not include images within the text. If any, images should be at the end of the text (max. two images). All information about forensic dentistry such as meeting reports, news from national societies, forensic activity reports, future forensic meeting announcements, etc. from IOFOS members/member societies, as well as from other contributors, are welcome. If you wish to be included on the IOFOS mailing list and receive the newsletter by e-mail please write to the above email address. Thank you!

**Cristiana Palmela
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Dear IOFOS readers, dear colleagues, and dear friends, welcome to the December 2023 edition of the IOFOS Newsletter. This is my first message in the Newsletter as President of IOFOS, elected last General Assembly in September 2023, Dubrovnik.

I hope this newsletter finds everyone enjoying the last month of 2023. The past three months have been busy for the new IOFOS Executive Board.

It is an honour for me to have been elected as President – our organisation is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, and the main goal is to provide a more solid foundation for IOFOS to support scientific societies in forensic odontology on their challenge to serve their forensic experts and regions with quality, more effectively, with greater relevance and responsiveness, and in a more inclusive and innovative manner.

When I applied for this position, I had four key words in my thoughts: recovery, transformation, innovation and inclusion. Quality education is understood as one of the most powerful and proven drivers for ensuring sustainable development, which can be applied in various educational contexts, formal and informal, and which can generate multiple benefits for IOFOS members.

I present in my candidacy a very strong and robust programme for the next three years that we started immediately after the new Executive Board was elected.

The strategic plan for 2023-2026 provides a roadmap for ensuring that IOFOS will continue to be: (1) A highly valued membership organisation for forensic odontologists and related fields of forensic experts around the world; (2) A global resource for forensic odontology information; (3) A strong and visible advocate for the discipline of forensic odontology and key com-

municator about forensic odontology to the community and general forensic experts; and (4) A recognised leader in designing educational programmes to serve the next generation of forensic odontologists as well as a more science-literate citizenry.



Taking these into account the new Executive Board will follow four goals that will shape the future programmes and activities of IOFOS for the next three years:

Goal 1: To better serve the IOFOS members

Attracting and serving a diverse and inclusive membership worldwide is of foremost importance. Finding new and more effective ways to communicate with IOFOS members is essential to maintaining a large and engaged membership with the young generation of forensic odontologists community and other forensic experts.

Goal 2: To better serve the forensic odontology community

IOFOS is dedicated to providing world-class peer reviewed journal and organising stimulating forensic odontology meetings, as well as leading and partnering outstanding forensic odontology

education initiatives, deepening its global engagement, and advocating for stronger forensic odontologists society.

Goal 3: To better serve society

As a leading source of forensic odontology information, IOFOS will build greater public support for forensic odontology, specifically, and forensic science, in general. It will engage the membership in conveying the importance and excitement of forensic odontology to the public and will provide opportunities for its members to bring their expertise and passion to bear on solutions to important societal problems.

Goal 4: To increase organisational excellence

To fulfil the goals and objectives of this strategic plan will require both unity of purpose by the entire IOFOS executive and an appropriate supporting infra-

structure, to allow for a common organisational vision and to ensure that the IOFOS remains a dynamic scientific membership society.

I can only promise my utmost efforts to try to achieve these aims. I dream of an organisation where experts of the different fields of our discipline from all the countries can feel at home, exchanging ideas and knowledge, so we can progress towards a better forensic science and therefore to better justice, always paying particular attention to young people.

I wish a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all.

Looking forward to seeing you again.

Warmest regards,

Cristiana Palmela Pereira

Hrvoje Brkić

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Triennial Congress of the International Organization for Forensic Odonto-Stomatology – IOFOS 2023

The International Organization for Forensic Odonto-Stomatology (IOFOS), in cooperation with the School of Dental Medicine University of Zagreb and the Croatian Association of Forensic Stomatologists, held a three-day International Congress of Forensic Odonto-Stomatology at the University of Dubrovnik, Croatia from September 6 to 9, 2023.

More than 150 participants from 40 countries (Figs. 1 & 2) presented scientific and professional methods of identification of the human body based on the recognition of teeth, analysis of human bite, determination of dental age and malpractice in the dental office. The Congress was preceded by six half-day workshops, and the lecturers were world-

renowned forensic odontologists. The workshops covered six different topics: W1 – Identification by Comparative Dental Analysis in Disaster Victim Identification by Cristiana Palmela Pereira and Ricardo Henrique Alves da Silva; W2 – Bite mark analysis: understanding the concepts of 3D pattern fit and addressing the realities of distortion and cognitive bias by Herman Bernitz; W3 – Age Estimation project by Roberto Cameriere and Ivan Galić; W4 – Application of artificial intelligence in forensic dentistry by Marin Vodanović; W5 – ASUDAS scoring system: the application of tooth morphology in ancestry estimation; W6 – How to write and publish articles in forensic odontology by Vilma Pinchi and Francesco Pradela.



Fig. 1: The official Congress logo (top left); sights and scenes from the Welcome Reception in Palace Sponza, including the Folk ensemble Lindo.



Fig. 2: Joint photo of participants at the University of Dubrovnik, the venue for the Congress.

At the opening of the meeting, Dživo Brčić, Head of the Office for Education, Sports, Social Welfare and Civil Society of the City of Dubrovnik, addressed the attendees. Associate Professor Marijana Pećarević, Vice-Rector for international cooperation and science at the University of Dubrovnik, Full Professor Zrinka Tarle, Dean of the School of Dental Medicine, University of Zagreb, and Full Professor Hrvoje Brkić as the president of the distinguished IOFOS organization that celebrated its 50th anniversary in Dubrovnik.

Eighty-five presentations were classified by the scientific committee into several groups: invited lecturers, oral presentations, poster presentations and a student competition for the best presentation. In addition to the rich scientific part, the congress was accompanied by various social events such as the welcome reception in the Sponza

Palace located in the very heart of the old city of Dubrovnik. In addition to the welcome drink and sweet snacks, the folklore ensemble Lindo performed in the cultural and artistic part of the meeting. On the second day of the Congress, all participants could tour the old town of Dubrovnik with an expert licensed guide. The last day was marked by two events: a Congress dinner on the tourist ship Karaka, known for its participation in the filming of the Game of Thrones series and driving around the whole of Dubrovnik – from the old port to the official port of Gruž, and the General Assembly, where the outgoing President handed over the Presidential Collar to the newly elected President of IOFOS, Professor Cristiana Palmela Pereira from the University of Lisbon, Portugal (Fig. 3).

Hrvoje Brkić

MEETING REPORT

Newsletter of the INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION for FORENSIC ODONTO-STOMATOLOGY (IOFOS)
Volume 45, Issue 2, December 2023 | www.iofos.eu



Fig. 3: The new IOFOS Executive Board for the period 2023-26 (above left, L-R) Treasurer Hrvoje Brkić, Newsletter Editor Ashith Acharya, Secretary Marin Vodanović, President Cristiana Palmela Pereira, JFOS Editor Vilma Pinchi and Vice President Ricardo Henrique Alves Da Silva; felicitation of past IOFOS Presidents (above right); authors and publisher of the Textbook of Forensic Odonto-Stomatology by IOFOS (below).



Hrvoje Brkić

**Treasurer &
Immediate Past
President, IOFOS**

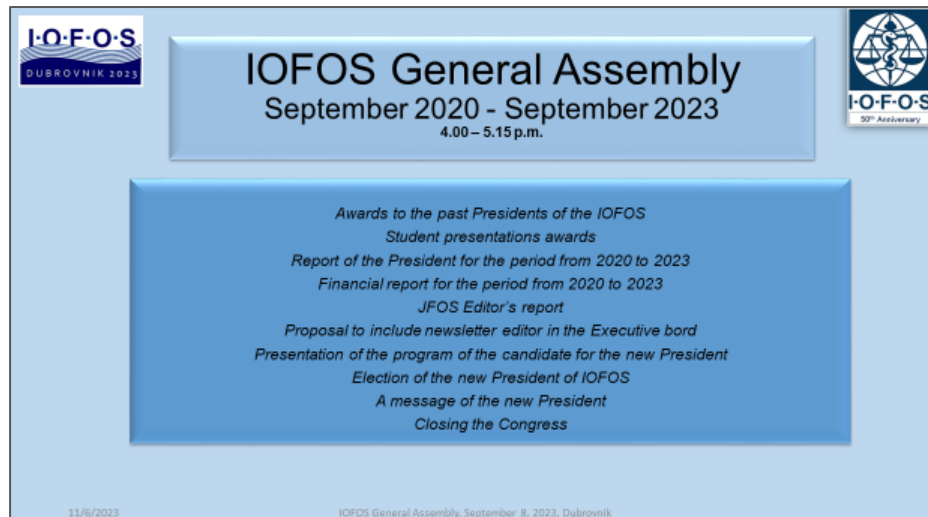
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Minutes of the IOFOS General Assembly, September 2023



The General Assembly (GA) was held on Friday, 8 September, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. (CEST) (3:00 p.m. UTC/GMT) during the Triennial Congress of IOFOS in Dubrovnik, Croatia. The agenda, which was announced in March and advertised on the IOFOS website, was led by President Hrvoje Brkić and Secretary Ricardo Henrique Alves da Silva. Before the annual report, and on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of IOFOS, plaques were awarded to all past IOFOS presidents present: Eddy de Valck 1999-2002; Tore Solheim 2002-2005; Herman Bernitz 2005-2008, 2008-2011; Vilma Pinchi 2011-2014, 2014-2017; Hrvoje Brkić 2017-2020, 2020-2023. The plaque was also intended for Håkan Mörnstad 1996-1999, but he did not appear at the congress, so it will be sent to him by mail.

During the congress, a student competition for the best presentation was held, and the committee consisted of: Jelena Dumančić, Ricardo Henrique Alves da Silva and Iztok Štampelj. Three prizes were awarded, and the prizes went to students from Denmark, Portugal and Croatia.

Agenda item 1 – Presidential Report

Report of the President of IOFOS for the past three years. It was based on the following points:

- An online symposium “Forensic odontology before and during the COVID-19 pandemic” was held December 5th 2020 via YouTube;
- Continuous work of IOFOS on social networks namely LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram and thus internationally popularized the work of IOFOS;
- Furthermore, through active participation in international conferences and popularized IOFOS;
- International project is the publication of a textbook entitled "Forensic Odonto-Stomatology by IOFOS" completed in 2021;
- The publication of JFOS was continuous and regular;
- The publication of national associations' reports in the IOFOS Newsletter was continuous and regular;
- Through successful teamwork with all members of the Executive Board, he paid particular attention to the care of the work of national associations within IOFOS,

including the organization of the collection of membership fees;

- Organization of the IOFOS Triennial Congress in Dubrovnik, which was postponed for September 2023 due to the pandemic caused by COVID-19;
- Taking care of finances.

During his presentation, Emilio Nuzzolese from Italy joined in with the suggestion that the President's report should also include participation in Imola, Italy, at the end of June 2023. After the IOFOS President's presentation, there were no additional questions and the report was approved.

Agenda item 2 – Presentation of IOFOS finance matters

Due to absence at the GA of the Treasurer, Patrick Thevissen, for justified reasons, the financial report was presented by the President of IOFOS. He announced and displayed the account balance during the beginning of the mandate in 2020 and at the end of the mandate (30 August, 2023). The payments made were based on the annual membership fees of national associations. The resulting payments were the investment of the collected funds in:

- Hosting and development of the new IOFOS webpage;
- Hosting and creation of a new website for the Journal of Forensic Odonto-Stomatology;
- Converting Word documents of JFOS articles into an XML version for uploading to the PubMed Central database.

The entire balance sheet is shown with invoices that have been paid for the mentioned investments. The audit of the entire finances was done by Marin Vodanović, Editor, IOFOS Newsletter. At the end of the report the President asked the GA if it agreed with the

financial report, and all participants approved the same with no additional questions.

Agenda item 3 – Report of the Journal of Forensic Odonto-Stomatology

Vilma Pinchi, Editor of Journal of Forensic Odonto-Stomatology (JFOS), gave a detailed report on collecting articles for publication in the journal, reviewing articles and publishing. The volume of JFOS has been increased from two to three issues per year. She also gave a detailed report on moving JFOS from the existing server to PKP Publishing Services Network, which professionally administers the Open Journal System with which JFOS manages authors, editors and reviewers. Each article must be converted from a Word document to an XML version to be compatible for indexing in PubMed Central. After the presentation, there were no additional questions, and the JFOS Editor's report was adopted.

Agenda item 4 – Addition of new post in IOFOS Executive Board

The President of IOFOS explained that the Executive Board has six members, which is an "even number", and when it is necessary to make some decisions, it is good to have an "odd number". The post of 'Editor of the IOFOS Newsletter', is not a member of the Executive Board in the last ten years, but an external collaborator, and his voice could sometimes help in making decisions. For this reason, the President proposed that the seventh member 'Editor of the IOFOS Newsletter' be included in the Executive Board. The GA unanimously approved the President's proposal.

Agenda item 5 – Proposal for the new President of IOFOS (2023 to 2026)

Ricardo Henrique Alves da Silva, in the role of Secretary, informed the GA that members of the election commission: Christ Verbiest (Belgium), Thiago Beaini (Brazil) and Gabriel M. Fonseca (Chile) received only one proposal for the new President of IOFOS for the period 2023 to 2026 – from the Portuguese National Association for the candidacy of Professor Cristiana Palmela Pereira. The candidate was invited to the stage to introduce herself and present her work plan. Following a self-introduction, Prof. Cristiana Palmela Pereira put forth a Strategic Plan designed by her for 2023-2026 that followed four goals that will shape the future programmes and activities of IOFOS:

- Goal One – To better serve the IOFOS members
- Goal Two – To better serve the Forensic Odontology Community
- Goal Three – To better serve Society
- Goal Four – To increase Organisational Excellence

Agenda item 6 – Election of the new President

All representatives of national associations (22 in all) were seated in the first two rows. Voting was done by secret ballot by indicating Yes/No adjacent to the candidate's name. Members of the election commission distributed one ballot paper to each representative, ensuring that there were no extra voters. After the vote was cast, all ballots were collected, sorted and the votes counted on the stage in view of the GA and national associations' representatives. In total, 21 voted in "Yes", and one ballot

remained uncirculated. Immediate Past President Hrvoje Brkić presented the newly elected IOFOS President Cristiana Pereira the Presidential Collar, congratulated her and handed her a glass plaque that read "New IOFOS President from 2023 to 2026".

Agenda item 7 – Message of the new President

The new President said that it was a honour for her to have been elected of the International Organization of Forensic Odonto-Stomatology (IOFOS) and this was a big responsibility as well. She said she was very proud, happy, and thankful to be elected. The progress in internationalization and the combination of scientific excellence with humanitarian aspects have been impressive achievements of the previous Executive Board of IOFOS, she said and further hoped that this will continue during her presidential term 2023-2026. With all of these in mind, the President pledged her commitment and dedication to achieving the best for a better future for the IOFOS. She concluded her acceptance address by once again thanking the national associations' representatives and all at the GA.

Agenda item 8 – Closing the Congress

The GA ended at 5:20 pm (CEST) with the closing of the Congress and a joint photo of the past IOFOS Presidents with the newly elected President, a joint photo of the new Executive Board and all authors of the IOFOS book and Director of the publishing house 'Naklada Slap'.

Hrvoje Brkić
&
Ricardo Henrique Alves da Silva

Eddy De Valck

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ETAF;

Past President,

IOFOS

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Congress of the Portuguese Dental Association, November 2023



Exponor, the congress center in Matosinhos, Porto, Portugal, located on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, was the venue for the 32nd Congress of the Portuguese Dental Association (Ordem dos Médicos Dentistas) from 9-11 November 2023 and attended by more than 3,400 dentists worldwide.

IOFOS President Christina Palmela Pereira, member of the Scientific Committee of the Congress, included two sessions on DVI and Forensic Odontology, which attracted a lot of interest in an outstanding scientific programme which covered all aspects of dentistry.

Past IOFOS President Eddy De Valck, ETAF Director Sciences, and Past Chief Commander DVI Belgium, Christian Decobecq, ETAF Director Police (Fig. 1), both with years of DVI experience and delivering DVI training programmes worldwide nowadays conducted two half-day sessions for an enthusiastic group of Portuguese and European dentists, although most of them were unfamiliar with forensic odontology and DVI in particular. The National Prosecutor, Alexandra Coelho responsible for Portuguese DVI matters, honored us with her presence during the presentations and took an active part in the discussions.

The first day both lectures focused on organisational aspects of a DVI operation both

from the police side and the odontology part. Christian Decobecq explained and illustrated in a two-hour lecture the role of the police in the organisation of DVI operations and the deployment of the different partners involved (fire brigade, civil protection, emergency services, national crisis centre, Red Cross, justice, CBRN services). Through his long experience as a member of the Belgian DVI team, the Interpol DVI Steering Group and his presidency of the CEPOL group he was able to illustrate in the first place the Interpol DVI philosophy, explain the different types of mass disasters and highlight the position and responsibilities of the different partners involved in the deployment during a DVI action. All this theory was illustrated by numerous photos of the operations he had been working in as a member of the Belgian DVI team and Interpol DVI Group.

Subsequently past IOFOS President Eddy De Valck talked about the position and role of the forensic odontologist in the different phases of a DVI team deployment. Initial focus was on the qualifications and training odontologists should have to successfully participate in DVI



Fig. 1: IOFOS President Christiana Palmela Pereira is flanked by past IOFOS President Eddy De Valck and ETAF Director Police and Past Commander DVI Belgium, Christian Decobecq (L); National Prosecutor Alexandra Coelho with Christiana Palmela Pereira and Christian Decobecq.

operations and their role and participation in the Interpol DVI Steering and Standing Committee. In the latter part of the lecture the different phases of a DVI operation were systematically highlighted in detail and the role of the odontologist in these phases were described, discussed and illustrated with photos from numerous kinds of mass disasters he had been involved in.

The second day was devoted to the hands-on workshop on the Interpol DVI forms. The participants received an initial briefing about the Interpol DVI AM and PM forms, the dental abbreviations and the way to

use them. They all received AM data (records, X-ray material, photos, letters, dental casts) from missing persons which had to be transcribed onto the AM (Yellow) Interpol 600 and 700 pages. The same happened with PM data from a number of unidentified victims which were to be transcribed to the PM (Pink) Interpol forms. The workshop ended with the comparison of both AM and PM data, and the reconciliation and identification process. Final conclusion and justification of the conclusions had to be written by the participants as a final part of exercise and were discussed with the instructors.

Eddy De Valck

Selina M. Leow

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International Association of Forensic Sciences Conference, November 2023

The 23rd Triennial international association of forensic sciences (IAFS) conference was held between 21-24 November 2023 in Sydney, Australia (Fig. 1). It was held in conjunction with the 26th Symposium of the Australian and New Zealand Forensic Science Society (ANZFSS) at the International Convention Centre, Darling Harbour, Sydney. The meeting theme was: Where to from here? And endeavoured to prompt the forensic science community to review contemporary practices and consider strategies to improve operational contributions and effectiveness in the light of both current and future challenges.

Monday 20 November was a pre-conference workshops/meeting day. I organised a small presentation morning for a limited number of Forensic Odontology/IAFS delegates at the New South Wales (NSW) Forensic Medicine and Coroner's Court Complex (FMCCC) (Fig. 2) and then, a tour of the NSW Mortuary. Presentations were given by the NSW Forensic Odontology Unit Director, NSW Police, NSW Department of Justice as well as Presentations from the Australian Society of Forensic Odontology (AuSFO) Grant recipients from Fiji and the Cook Islands.

The NSW State Clinical Director had granted my request to allow a tour of the NSW mortuary. This is the first tour allowed for us since moving to this facility in January 2019. It was a very rare opportunity for delegates to tour the facility – the largest Forensic Medicine facility in Australia, built at a cost of AU\$ 91.5 million (approx. US\$ 61.5 million).

There were 22 disciplines represented at the IAFS conference including Forensic Odontology. Other disciplines represented were: Anthropology and Archaeology, Biological Criminalistics, Chemical Criminalistics, Clinical Forensic Medicine & Forensic Nursing, Crime Scene Investigation, Digital Forensic Science and Electronic Evidence, Document Examination, Education & Training, Fingerprint Evidence and Biometrics, Firearms and Toolmarks, Fires & Explosions, Forensic Pathology, Forensic Taphonomy and Entomology, Humanitarian Forensic Science, Illicit Drugs and Clandestine Laboratories, Management and Quality Assurance, Military Forensic Science and Counterterrorism, Psychiatry & Behavioural Sciences, Science, Justice and Legal Issues, Toxicology and Pharmacology, Wildlife Forensics & Environmental Crime.



Fig. 1: The landmark Sydney Harbour Bridge (L) and Opera House.



Fig. 2: Delegates at the IAFS conference (L); the Forensic Medicine and Coroners Court Complex.

There were approximately 30 Forensic Odontologists in attendance at the conference from Australia (all states and territories represented), Malaysia, Nepal, South Korea, Ethiopia, USA, Fiji and the Cook Islands. There were also a few Forensic Odontologists who attended as representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Forensic Odontology had approximately 10 presentations over two days in the breakout sessions. There were a number of Forensic Odontology presenters in the Mini Oral Presentations (Fig. 3) and Digital Posters sections and these two categories were won by two young Australian Forensic Odontology officers – Dr. Ryan Choi and Dr. Harry Perkins, respectively. Well Done!

The Conference Social Programme included a Welcome Reception, a Social Night hosted by the ANZFSS with a theme 'Out of this World' and a Gala Dinner event held in the Crystal Palace, Luna Park

(Fig. 3) and Forensic Odontology Social Events included a Yum Cha lunch and a dinner held at the Planar Restaurant, Darling harbour. Overall, it was a well-organised conference. Even though Forensic Odontology is a very small speciality field, we were well represented by our more senior and experienced Forensic Odontologists in attendance through to our lesser experienced Forensic Odontology colleagues and everyone in between. Most importantly, it was valuable for recent research to be presented and heard across all disciplines.

As a born and bred Australian from Sydney, it was so great to be able to have so many friends (old and new) in my hometown. The Sydney weather wasn't as good as it could have been but I hope everyone had a great time nevertheless! The next IAFS conference will be held in 2026 in Bulgaria.

Selina M. Leow

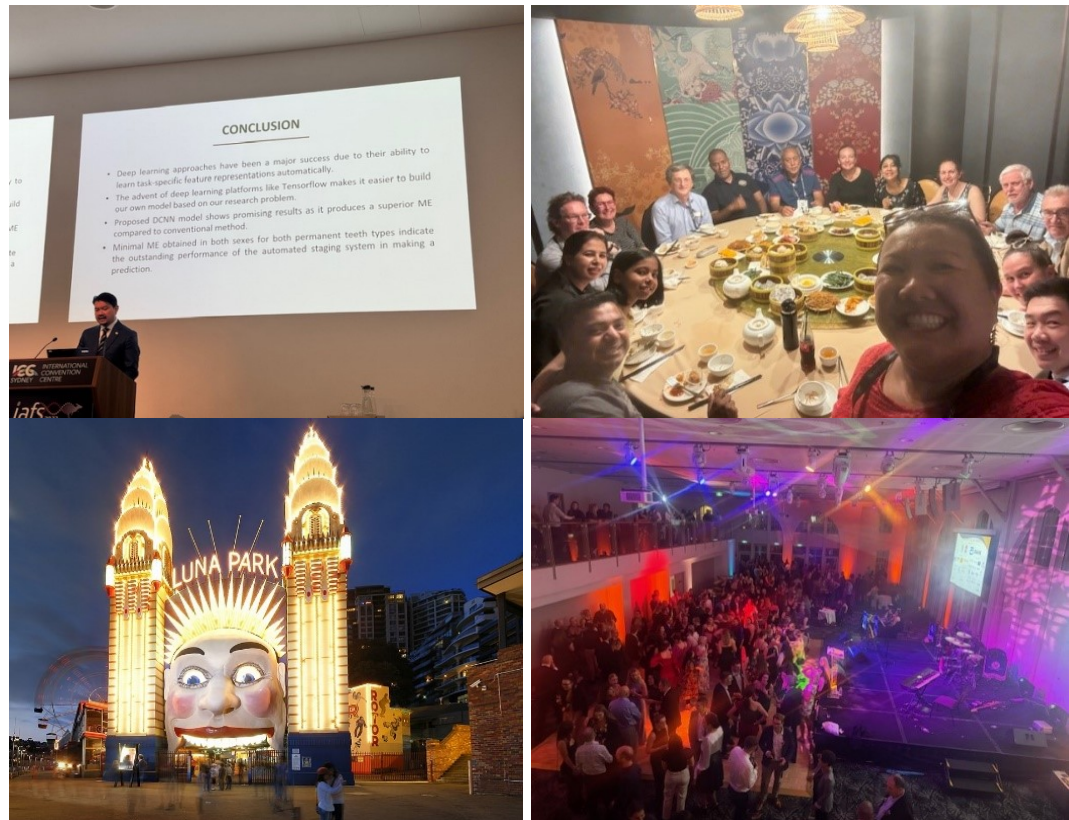


Fig. 3: Forensic Odontology presentation by Prof. Mohd. Yusmialdil Putera Mohd. Yusof from Malaysia (top left); a selfie by the author at Yum Cha lunch (top right); the Gala Dinner Event at Luna Park, Sydney (bottom).

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20th National Conference of the Indian Association of Forensic Odontology, September 2023

The 20th National Conference of the Indian Association of Forensic Odontology (IAFO) was successfully organised in ITS College of Dental Sciences and Research, Ghaziabad, India on 22-24 September, 2023. The landmark conference aimed at comprehensive understanding of forensic odontology and its applications in India and beyond. It was attended by 361 delegates including undergraduates, graduate students, faculty members from 40 dental colleges, as well as private dental practitioners from all over India. To begin with, two preconference hands-on workshops, one on 'Forensic Dental anthropology: Fundamentals and Practical Approach' by Jayasankar Pillai and 'Forensic Facial Approximation: Basics and Beyond' by Aman Chowdhry, Deepika Bablani and Priyanka Kapoor were conducted on 22 September. Each course had about 20 registered participants, who enthusiastically contributed to the success of the hands-on events. On 23 September, the main conference commenced with an inaugural programme. RP Chadha – Chairman of the host institute – was Chief Guest, while Director-Principal of the dental college Devicharan Shetty, Organising Chairperson Anshi

Jain, IAFO President S Balagopal and IAFO Secretary Ashith Acharya were other dignitaries who inaugurated the conference (Fig. 1).

Following this were a variety of keynote lectures, including renowned international experts Sigrid Kvaal (Norway) and John Berketa (Australia) who both delivered their presentations online. A range of experts from India spoke on topics spanning dental jurisprudence, forensic humanitarian action, bite mark investigation and forensic higher education. The speakers included Sonali Kadam, Jayasankar Pillai, J Augustine and Ashith Acharya.

Furthermore, there were 70 poster presentations and 102 paper presentations by dentist and dental student delegates, with the best being awarded prizes.

Fig. 1: Outgoing IAFO President S Balagopal delivered the Presidential address at the conference inauguration.



On the sidelines of the conference, a new Office was elected with the IAFO having its first female President in Raji Viola Solomon. Ashith Acharya took over as President-elect while Jayasankar Pillai was elected Secretary

and J Augustine Joint-Secretary; Sudeendra Prabhu continues as Treasurer. The valedictory programme at the end of the conference marked the handing over of charge to the new Office (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2: The approx. 360 delegates at the conference (above); J Augustine delivering his keynote presentation (below left); the new President Raji Viola Solomon with outgoing President S Balagopal and outgoing Secretary Ashith Acharya (below right).



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A Visit to India, October 2023

This summer I was invited to the Sharda University which is situated about 40 km south-east of Delhi in greater Noida in the state of Uttar Pradesh. They wished to arrange a one-day course in Forensic Odontology and Parul Khare Sinha was the person who invited me. As I had never been to India before, I felt this was a golden opportunity and at the same time I offered to hold a one-day course in the Interpol DVI computer program, PlassData. I just had arranged a one-day course in Tours, France, in the meeting of the French society for odontological identifications. Therefore, I had access to the program. However, due to unknown technical issues we ended up with a 3 hours program for me at the university. The meeting did in addition consist of lectures from India and Dr. Botond Simon from Hungary who was also specially invited. It was a surprise for me that the meeting had participants from local dental students, dentists

and in addition medical students and forensic pathologists.

Sharda University

My India trip lasted from 16th to 23rd October. On arrival in New Delhi (Indira Gandhi International Airport) I was picked up by a dental student with chauffeur and taken to a hotel close to the dental school. Delhi is the capital of India and has 12 million inhabitants and 24 million if we take the surroundings into account. India itself have now about 1.4 billion inhabitants and has surpassed China as the most populated country in the world. Everything in Sharda University was arranged for me. The next day I was picked up by Parul Khare Sinha and taken to the dental school of Sharda University, which is a private university with several faculties, including a medical school and a hospital. All buildings were in the same style and apparently built around the same time (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1: Sharda university with the dental school to the right-hand side of the photo (L); meeting at the Dean's office (R) (from left, the oral pathologist, the Dean, Parul Khare Sinha, Tore Solheim and Botond Simon).

It was time to get to know the university and the dental school and we met at the Dean's office for an orientation and to meet other important people, both at the dental

and medical school (Fig. 1). Parul Khare Sinha is responsible for teaching in oral pathology and forensic odontology and specialized in forensic odontology in the

one-year course at the dental school of Leuven, Belgium, under Patrick Thevissen. At the moment, they only have voluntary (not compulsory) teaching in forensic odontology. Then we met the students who had chosen to see what forensic odontology is. It was about 10 students, and all had done a project studying one facet of forensic

odontology and made a poster of their work (Fig. 2). They had to present the work to us in English and I was impressed by it. In the evening we were invited home to Parul Khare Sinha and it was nice to see her young daughter and also talk to her husband. Especially interesting was to visit a real Indian home.



Fig. 2: One of the student's presentation of an overview of forensic odontology (L); the Taj Mahal in white decorated marble, and the people seen are tourists on a general workday (R).

The Meeting

Next day was the day of the conference. Following a brief delay, first out was Dr. Botond Simon invited from Hungary. He presented an interesting research project they had done in Budapest about the use of intraoral scans of palatal rugae in identification. After a presentation by Adarsh Kumar about a multidisciplinary approach to DVI in India, I was asked to give a shortened lecture of 30 minutes, which I improvised to maintain time and talked about identification in general. Then Rakesh Gorea from India who is president of the Indo-Pacific Society of Forensic Odontology talked about forensic odontology in India and was most satisfied that it has been growing a lot. Then the forensic pathologist in Sharda University talked about forensic odontology. I had to give two talks, one about the Norwegian ID mission after the 2004 tsunami in Thailand, and another about quality assurance in identification. I should have given a demonstration of PlassData computer system for identification. However, it did not work at the University campus.

Maybe this was a 'blessing in disguise', as I had to reduce the time since others had exceeded their time limit! I also shortened down the talk about Thailand. The day finished with Parul Khare Sinha talking about forensic odontology at Sharda University. At the moment, forensic odontology is only an elective subject, but a number of students have made the choice. She could also tell that practical forensic odontology was done by dentists from other universities as was also the case with forensic medicine. After the day we were invited to a nice restaurant for a dinner on the University.

Agra

Next day started my tourism with a visit to Agra and Taj Mahal. I was driven there (about 200 km south-east of Delhi) by my host. Let me just say that driving in India is not for the fainthearted nor the inexperienced – it is challenging and at times hazardous for an outsider. What lay ahead though was the crown jewel, Taj Mahal, in white marble was fantastic as the picture

shows (Fig. 2). It seems a little too much to use so much effort and money for a mausoleum for a beloved wife of Shah Jehan, the Mughal emperor from 1631 AD. She died delivering their fourteenth child.

Jaipur

Following this, I had a car with a driver organized for the next three days through travel agent in Delhi. He took me to Jaipur about 300 km south-west of Delhi. It was a most interesting city and I enjoyed a nice hotel and a colorful street. The next day I had a special guide as the driver did not speak English. Jaipur has been the capital in a kingdom in Northern India. Interesting was the palace from the year 1799 where the wives of the king had special windows to look out in the street to follow what was going on there. They were not allowed to go out in the street. Another interesting place was Jantar Mantar which is an open-air observatory build in 1728. Here is a number of exact sun dials and other observatory equipment. Finally, we visited the Amber fort. It is a big fortress on a hilltop (Fig. 3). It contained an impressive royal castle from the Islamic time. From the for-

trass one could observe a wall like the Great Wall of China but of course not so long. It was built from 1734 and the function was to protect Jaipur after the city became the capital of a kingdom.

Back to Delhi and onward home

The next day we drove back to Delhi and started early in the morning. Then the traffic was not so bad and we had time to see a couple of temples there. The Lotus temple was fantastic and majestic with the shape of a lotus flower (Fig. 3). Another temple impressed with its carvings and a lot of gold.

After the tour it was as always nice to come home. However, the memories from one of the biggest nations in the world was an experience for life for me. I was most impressed by seeing India much developed, and not the stereotypical 'underprivileged country' as one who has not been there may think. Many thanks to Parul Khare Sinha for the invitation!

Tore Solheim



Fig. 3: The Amber fort in Jaipur (L). The fort was built to protect Jaipur and the king or "Raja" in a great kingdom in Northern India. He had a fantastic palace within the fort; the Lotus temple in Delhi – inside was a big hall with high roof in the lotus (R).

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Young Investigators and Forensic Odontology Research

On the proposal of Prof. Cristiana Palmela Pereira, President of the IOFOS Board 2023-2026, the first e-Symposium focusing on the work of young research fellows, Ph.D. students, and research collaborators titled *"Young Investigators and Forensic Odontology Research"* was held on 2 December 2023. The speakers presented to the IOFOS Executive Board and registered participants globally their research projects carried out in collaboration with various universities. With a view to continuous investment in the new generations and the desire to create an increasingly exploratory and collaborative scientific community, young people from dental schools of different countries were able to illustrate the latest developments in the fields of research in forensic odontology from all over the world and compare with the challenges and results proposed by other colleagues. The intent is to encourage an active and continuous exchange, open new paths, or highlight the main limitations of research that will have to be overcome, but above all to offer the possibility of international collaboration aimed at the same purpose: to highlight the individual to build and nourish a community that participates and is united in development and knowledge.

Focusing on what is perceived by young people who are beginning to approach the field of research and on what represents for them the strength of the scientific community, all nine researchers (coming from Portugal, Italy, Croatia, Brazil, Denmark, India, South Africa) were subjected to a survey that assessed their expectations of this event

and in the future of forensic odontology.

1. What are your expectations from the e-Symposium?

We anticipate that the e-Symposium will provide us with a platform to present our work and engage in insightful exchanges with other peer speakers who share a common focus in the same fields. We hope not only to present our investigations and findings but also to actively brainstorm our ideas and hear about the cutting-edge thoughts of our peers, to be inspired for future research and possible collaborations that dive into the overarching challenges faced within our shared work of forensic odonto-stomatology.

By participating in this e-Symposium, we aspire to foster a collaborative environment where diverse perspectives converge to address common challenges. The exchange of ideas and experiences among speakers is very important for broadening our understanding of the subject matter. We look forward to the dynamic discussions that will undoubtedly arise, providing a forum for collective problem-solving and knowledge enrichment. Overall, our expectation is that this symposium will be a platform for learning, networking, and embracing the limitless possibilities of the digital realm, thereby contributing significantly to the evolution of forensic odontology practices.

2. What are the goals of the e-symposium?

The IOFOS e-Symposium aims to facilitate knowledge exchange and professional development among practitioners. It seeks to foster collaboration and

networking, encouraging the sharing of real-world case studies and practical insights into the current and future research in forensic odontology, and bridging the gap between theoretical frameworks and practical application in forensic investigations. The e-symposium may emphasise ethical considerations, highlighting the importance of integrity and professionalism in forensic odontology practices. It will definitely explore the integration of cutting-edge technologies into the field and promote global perspectives by bringing together professionals from different countries. Additionally, the e-symposium will aim to raise public awareness about the crucial role forensic odontology plays in legal investigations.

The e-Symposium aims to be a space to encourage the new generation of researchers so that we can share knowledge and perspectives about scientific research in Forensic Odontology and explore other options and approaches, along the journey to become a Forensic MSc. or PhD.

3. *What is your general feeling about investigation in forensic odontology?*

Forensic odontology, as a specialised, crucial, and fascinating niche within dental and forensic sciences, faces several significant challenges. It involves the application of dental knowledge and techniques to identify individuals, establish the circumstances surrounding a case, and contribute valuable evidence in legal investigations. The use of dental records, bite mark analysis, and other dental evidence can be instrumental in solving crimes, identifying victims, and providing critical information in criminal, labor, civil, administrative, and family law. The precision and uniqueness of dental characteristics make forensic odontology a powerful

tool in the investigative process, offering a distinctive perspective that complements other forensic disciplines.

Performing research in Forensic Odontology requires the researcher to develop skills in various knowledge areas and to be able to consider their interrelationships. In our view, young professionals in forensic investigations face significant challenges. The main issue is the lack of a standardised accreditation process for new forensic odontologists, making it difficult for them to independently work on forensic cases. Our personal experience aligns with this, as we entered forensic odontology with a strong desire to work directly in the field. However, some of us have encountered a shortage of opportunities to engage in practical forensic work, largely due to the absence of a structured accreditation system, creating a gap between academic training and hands-on forensic casework.

This requires a collective effort within the forensic community to address challenges and create an environment that supports the growth and involvement of young professionals in forensic odontology.

4. *Do you feel you are getting adequate support? Or do you feel you need more support?*

The level of support available in the field of forensic odontology varies significantly, largely influenced by institutional resources and priorities. There is a palpable need for enhanced support, particularly in terms of funding allocation, access to advanced technological tools, and the facilitation of interdisciplinary collaborations, which could substantially improve the quality of research and practical outcomes in this field.

Most of us feel that we have excellent support from our supervisors, colleagues, and the surrounding network, however, we would like to see additional initiatives designed to actively engage and integrate young generations of forensic odontologists into the field of forensic research. Addressing this need would not only advance collaborative endeavors but also contribute to the sustained evolution and vitality of the forensic discipline.

Unfortunately, because of the general lack of support for non-mainstream research that involves financial, social and bureaucratic hurdles needed to be constantly circumvented in order to produce top-notch research, most of us feel that we could answer this question with more objectivity if we were involved in forensic odontology exclusively.

5. *What is your opinion related to research in the field of forensic odontology? What do you think about the future of forensic odontology?*

Research in forensic odontology is crucial for advancing the field, refining identification processes, and addressing challenges. The integration of emerging technologies, such as advanced imaging and 3D scanning, artificial intelligence, and automation moving it to quantitative data, holds promise for improving the precision and efficiency of dental identifications. Collaborations with fields like genetics and data science are

expected to contribute to more comprehensive forensic investigations. Therefore, despite the notable advances that Forensic Odontology has undergone over the years, this science establishes itself as a broad and promising field of scientific investigation with the engagement of sufficiently qualified participants, the securing of adequate funding to remunerate researchers appropriately, and an acute awareness of potential research biases with concerted efforts to mitigate them.

From our perspective, the level of research activity within the field of forensic odontology lacks a path for supporting researchers and young professionals to engage in meaningful work within this specialized field. This calls for attention from experts of the field who have substantial experience and established significant careers in the field. One promising approach to address this gap is the implementation of a mentorship program for young forensic odontologists, development of standardized protocols and ethical guidelines, enhancing the credibility of the discipline. The establishment of such mentorship programs would not only enhance the skill set of young professionals but also foster a sense of continuity and collaborative growth within the specialized domain of forensic odontology.

Overall, ongoing research efforts and interdisciplinary approaches are likely to shape a promising future for forensic odontology.

THE CONTRIBUTING YOUNG RESEARCHERS IN FORENSIC ODONTOLOGY



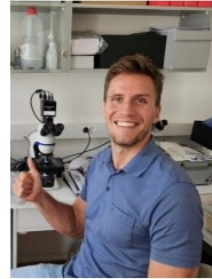
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IOFOS International Courses in Forensic Odontology 2024:

Personal Identification by Dental Methods (Croatia, Zagreb) and Age Estimation Workshop (Lisbon, Portugal)

The new Executive Board of IOFOS decided to promote two advanced international courses in forensic odontology that will take place in 2024. These international courses as continuing education provide the necessary tools to pursue research and practice in human identification by dental methods and age estimation. They are recommended for all professionals who act as forensic odontologist experts in the areas of disaster victim identification, single-dead bodies, and age estimation in living and dead bodies.

The first course of *Age estimation workshop* will be from 3–6 April, 2024, in Lisbon, Portugal. The course is designed to provide theoretical and practical skills to perform forensic examinations in the field of age assessment as required by law enforcement agencies, courts, families or medical examiners (coroners). The lectures will focus on an in-depth understanding of the correct professional handling, examination, interpretation, and presentation of evidence to the legal authorities through all aspects of the age estimation process in living persons and dead bodies for both developing subjects and adults, from making decisions at initial forensic examination, to writing a forensic report.

The general objectives of the course consist in the acquisition of basic skills in age estimation within the legal

frameworks, guidelines, good practices, and methods (knowledge, skills, and attitudes). The intervention of forensic experts will lead attendees to a correct and appropriate application of the forensic and judicial sciences to the best interest of society and to a good administration of justice, to the prevention of violence and to the treatment, protection, rehabilitation, and reintegration of people involved in issues with forensic and medico-legal repercussions. The age estimations in minors will consider minors as authors or victims of crimes and the related relevant threshold of ages in different countries. The specific legal and administrative demands of age estimations connected with unaccompanied minors or asylum seekers minors will be addressed considering EU legislation and protocols. A particular emphasis on how this science could and should articulate all the areas of medico-legal, legal, judicial, and forensic intervention in a multidisciplinary approach will be placed.

The assessment of knowledge will be carried out on the practical competence through two written final experts reports on age estimation based on two practical cases. The final classification of the international course on age estimation will be successful or unsuccessful. The successful participants will receive a proficiency certificate on age estimation for 2 years.

Registration is open to practicing forensic experts who wish to gain experience in the professional field of age estimation and for all professionals who are somehow related to the different areas of intervention of age assessment. Bachelor's or Master's degree in Dentistry and Medicine needed.

The second course of *Personal Identification by Dental Methods* will be from 1-5 July, 2024, in Zagreb, Croatia. The course is designed to provide practicing expert and all beginner forensic odontologist professionals with skills and experience in the field of forensic victim identification by dental methods, such as in the circumstances of Disaster Victim Identification, as required by law enforcement agencies, courts, or medical examiners (coroners). The lectures will offer on practical aspects of human identification in single bodies and DVI cases focusing on an up-to-date case law, best practice guidance, and best scientific evidence and it will provide an in-depth understanding of the correct professional handling, examination, interpretation, and presentation of evidence to the legal authorities through all aspects of the professional field of human identification by dental methods, from making decisions at initial forensic examination, to writing a forensic report.

The general objectives of the course consist in the acquisition of basic skills in human identification by dental methods within the legal frameworks, guidelines, good practices, and methods (knowledge, skills, and attitudes). The intervention of forensic experts will lead attendees to a correct

and appropriate application of the forensic and judicial sciences to the best interest of society and to a good administration of justice offering theoretical knowledge and practical skills for human identification purposes. The IOFOS course is addressed to enable interested forensic odontologists the competence and the practical skills to deal with human identification both in mass disaster and single dead body circumstances.

A particular emphasis on a basic knowledge about the various aspects of human identification by dental methods, in terms of scope, objectives, competencies, and pertinent legislation will be placed in a multidisciplinary approach.

The assessment of knowledge will be carried out on the practical competence through two written final experts reports on personal identification based on two practical cases. The final classification of the international course on age estimation will be successful or unsuccessful. The successful participants will receive a proficiency certificate on age estimation for 2 years.

Registration is open to practicing forensic experts who wish to gain experience in the professional field of age estimation and for all professionals who are somehow related to the different areas of intervention of personal identification. Bachelor's or Master's degree in Dentistry and Medicine needed.

Vilma Pinchi
&
Cristiana Palmela Pereira

I.O.F.O.S COURSE INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON AGE ESTIMATION

LISBON, PORTUGAL

3-6
APRIL
2024

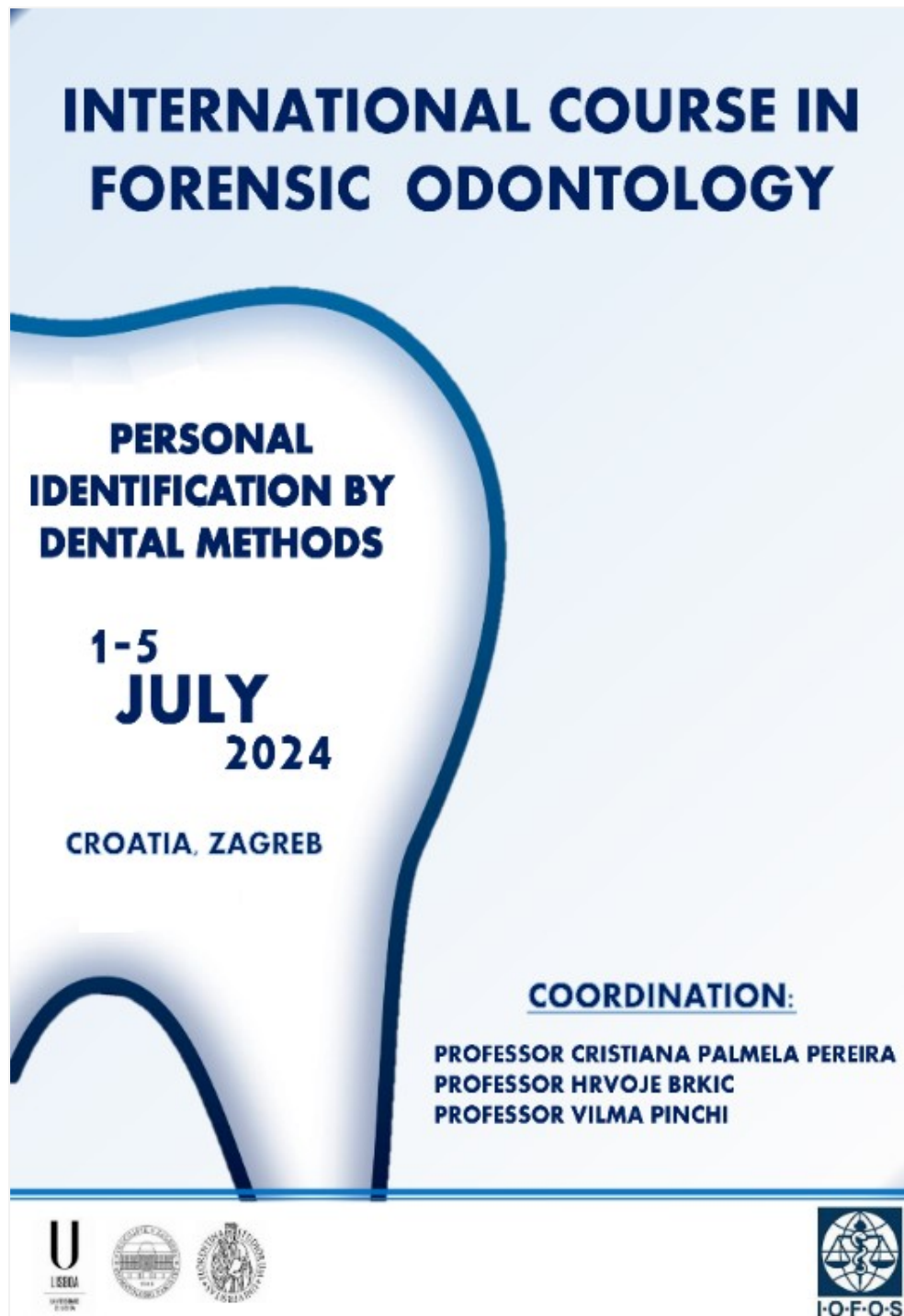


COORDINATION:

PROFESSOR CRISTIANA PALMELA PEREIRA
PROFESSOR HRVOJE BRKIC
PROFESSOR VILMA PINCHI



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INTERNATIONAL COURSE IN FORENSIC ODONTOLOGY

PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION BY DENTAL METHODS

1-5
JULY
2024

CROATIA, ZAGREB

COORDINATION:
PROFESSOR CRISTIANA PALMELA PEREIRA
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Season's Greetings

Executive Board

