iDENTIfyme Informative Campaign: Raising Forensic Dental Identification Awareness in the Community

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The identification of human remains can be performed visually through families and next-of-kin, but it is not advisable to rely only on visual recognition; instead, it is preferable to conduct a forensic comparison of antemortem and postmortem data for primary identifiers (fingerprints, DNA, and dental data). A dental autopsy is particularly valuable in the identification process of skeletonized, carbonized, saponified, and fragmented human remains. The principal challenge in the identification process is the search and collection of antemortem data. To this end, all dental information held on a missing person can represent a precious source of individualizing information that families should share with the police or investigating agencies after reporting a disappearance.

Key words: Human identification, Missing persons, Forensic odontology

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ported to the police. Portrait pictures or selfie pictures can show dental features such as diastema, rotated or wrongly positioned teeth, lip anomalies, recognizable fixed prosthetics, dental crown discolorations, and dental or cutis piercings [2,5].

The iDENTIfyme campaign raises awareness through an explanatory video helping families and relatives of missing individuals to recognize the above devices and to understand the importance of contacting their dentists to retrieve more dental information that could still be archived in a dental clinic, such as model casts showing palatal rugae [6], intraoral photographs, and prosthetics [7], as well as conformity certification of prosthetics and dental implant data [8].

The information campaign and the text have been translated, to date, into Arabic, Hindi, Italian, English, and Portuguese (الشخص هوَيْةً على التعرُف؛ ِiDENTIficami, iDENTIfyme, and iDENTIficame, respectively). The video shows clear and simple images of all the dental devices and dental-related data that should be searched by the families and then eventually delivered to the police. The campaign is available for further translations to forensic odontologists of all nationalities.

This information can be converted into valuable forensic individualizing data and compared with the biological profile of the unidentified deceased, excluding the incompatible profiles of the missing and narrowing the list of compatible candidates with whom to conduct the comparison of antemortem and post-mortal data to achieve a positive identification.

The informative campaign has also been distributed to missing persons national associations and media and has become a useful tool to place the importance of human identification (and, specifically, forensic odontology) in the spotlight of authorities in several countries where there is a need for more awareness and collaboration between families of the missing, police agencies, and forensic odontologists [9,10].

Ethics Statement
This paper is a perspective, so it did not need ethical approval.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
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