

History and Development of the Indian Association of Forensic Odontology

First Workshop on Forensic Odontology in India

The seeds of the creation of the IAFO were probably sown in August 1986 when Prof J.G. Kannappan from Madras Dental College and Prof P. Chandra Sekharan from the Forensic Sciences Department conducted the first National Workshop on Forensic Odontology at Chennai. Resource persons for the workshop were experts such as Dr. Kenneth Brown from Adelaide University, Australia, and specialists from Japan. Dental surgeons and forensic scientists numbering about forty were given training in forensic odontology. This led to solving of a few crimes using dental evidences.

First International Confernece on Forensic Odontology in India

The impetus for the formation of the IAFO gained as a result of the next major event in Forensic Odontology in India – an International Conference on Forensic Odontology which was conducted from 23-25 January 1998 at Hotel Saveria, Chennai. It was organised under the auspices of the Indian Society for Dental Research by Prof J.G. Kannappan as the Chairman, and Dr S. BalaGopal as Organising Secretary.

Some of the world-renowned participants were:

1. Dr. Hakan Mornstad, President of the International Organisation for Forensic Odontostomatology
2. Dr. David K. Whittaker, University of Wales College of Medicine, U.K.
3. Dr. Hasimoto Masatsgu, Japan
4. Prof. P. Chandrasekaran, Chennai
5. Prof. C. Damodaran, Forensic Sciences Lab, Chennai
6. Prof. K. Jyothindra Kumar, Forensic Odontologist, Kerala State Government, Trivandrum.
7. Prof. J.G. Kannappan, Chennai
8. Prof. S. BalaGopal, Chennai
9. Brigadier Dr. C Suryanarayanan
10. Dr. Malkanthi S. Chandrasekera, University of Peradeniya, SriLanka
11. Dr. Yvo Vermylen, Belgium
12. Dr. Tanaka T, Japan
13. Dr. Phrabhakaran Nambiar, South Africa
14. Dr. Hrvoje Brkic, Croatia,
15. Dr. Hassanali J, Kenya
16. Prof. Ashima Valiathan, India
17. Dr. Ajit D. Dinkar, India

The Governor of Tamil Nadu, Her Excellency Justice Fathima Beevi, inaugurated the conference. Her Excellency also released a book titled "Text Book on Oral Medicine". The book is edited by one of the charter members of the ISDR Prof. P.K. Dayal. Prof. J G Kannappan and Prof. S Balagopal had contributed a chapter on Forensic odonto-stomatology in this book.

Dr. Major D. Raja, the Vice-Chancellor of the Tamil Nadu Dr. M.G.R. Medical University, Chennai, inaugurated the Scientific Session. Renowned Tamil movie actor, Padmabushan Dr. Sivaji Ganesan, released the conference Souvenir.

Dr. Hakan Mornstad, President of the International Organisation for Odonto-stomatology and Dr. Sivaratna C. Savadi, the first lady dental surgeon to be the Director of Medical Education in the country (in Karnataka), rendered felicitations.

During the conference following resolutions were passed:

1. In India maintenance of dental records by all dental surgeons should be made mandatory.
2. Dental Council of India should initiate a Postgraduate course in Forensic Odontology at the earliest.
3. Government of India should recognise this important specialty and utilise the services of volunteering odontologists.
4. It is advised that aircrew and frequently travelling passengers should have dental records with salient case sheets, models, x-rays and photographs.

The entire conference was dedicated to the Golden Jubilee Year of Indian Independence.

The response for the conference and the large volume of new ideas in the field of forensic odontology discussed and exchanged during the conference was the incentive for initiating an association of Forensic Odontology in India. This culminated in the meetings of a few senior and junior dentists interested in the science in 2000, forming The Indian Association of Forensic Odontology (IAFO) and its subsequent official registration on 6 May 2002 at Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

The first General Body meeting was held on Sunday 16 June 2002 at Hotel Savera, Dr. RadhaKrishnan Salai, Chennai, at 10.30 AM. The following members were elected to the Office:

President – Dr. J.G. Kannappan, MDS, FICD
109, Dr. R.K. Salai, Chennai – 600004

Vice-President – Dr B.S. Bagi BDS, LLS, LLM
1361, Maruti Galli
Belagavi – 590002

Secretary – Dr. S. BalaGopal MDS, MSc (Forensic Science)

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Treasurer – Dr. Raji Viola Samraj

Dept. of Conservative Dentistry & Endodontics

Ragas Dental College

2/102, east Coast Road, Uthandi, Chennai – 600119

Jt. Secretary – Dr. K. Nagesh BDS

169, Raghu Complex

7th Main Sripuram, Bangalore – 560 021

Proposed Executive Committee Members: 1) Dr. Ashith B. Acharya, and 2) Dr. Hari Parkash

At the meeting it was resolved to conduct the first annual conference of the IAFO on Sunday the 29th December 2002.

The formation of the IAFO was officially intimated to the President of India, Prime Minister, Governor of Tamil Nadu, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and the President of the Dental Council of India. The objectives and the mission of the association was made known to them. The members of the association have offered to render their help in all the matters they can be useful in.
