

Improving Public Awareness on Reporting of Suspicious Activity

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Abstract: To define suspicious activity, it is something out of the ordinary or out of place considering the location. In many cases, people gave their everyday environment as a normal setting where any deviation would set off an internal trigger—e.g., unknown people or cars loitering in their neighborhood or near their workplaces, particularly late at night. The literature review showed that little research existed on the motivations and barriers that affect whether or not individuals report information to law enforcement. It is the research based findings that can inform local officials and community workers in developing education and awareness campaigns. Citizens working together with their police department make one of the most effective crime-fighting teams, which could be available to report the suspicious activities, suspicious person's information as: type of vehicle, number plate, any scar or marks on face or body, teeth (denture, braces, retainer, missing teeth), cigarettes or tobacco use, clothing, any tattoo, aroma etc. can be immediately reported to 100 (police helpline number). Evidence that is present needs to be preserved like bite marks or teeth found, to identify bodies by looking at and matching dental patterns with dental records collected by an expertise forensic odontologist. Importance of public awareness and to involve themselves with the stakeholders like police, forensic investigators, community organization and education, Govt. agencies. This highlights the importance of improving public awareness on suspicious activity through law enforcement advertisement clearly and concise methods by which people can report suspicious activity.

Keywords: Suspicious activity, law enforcement, public awareness, education, criminal justice system, Forensic Odontology, identification

INTRODUCTION

Forensic science provides one of the basic structural elements of criminal justice system. It provides the methodologies for understanding crime scenes, identifying suspects, and prosecuting and convicting criminals while exonerating innocent people [1]. One of these efforts relates to Suspicious Activity Reporting. "Suspicious Activity defines as "observed behavior reasonably indicative of pre-operational planning related to terrorism or other criminal activity." International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) found that most individuals rely on a combination of factors when determining if an activity, behavior, or object is suspicious and merits reporting to the authorities. These factors are: Concern about the potential for harm to the community [2], Belief that the information may be useful to law enforcement, Personal observation of activities, Personal instinct, the agreement of others nearby that something is not right. Suspicious activities in and of themselves may not always be criminal, but when combined with other activities may be precursors to a larger criminal or

terrorist plot. Suspicious things may include any objects, person, bags, suitcases, packages, cars, activity and other that are left unattended or seem out of place in the surroundings. Suspicious activity can occur anywhere – in residential neighborhood, rural areas, or larger metropolitan areas [2].

Residents know their communities best and are often the first to notice when something out of the ordinary occurs. For local outreach campaigns, explains how to effectively develop and disseminate messages in order to help the public better understand their role in reporting suspicious activity. The public has long served as the "eyes and ears" of their communities. Community members support hometown security by being alert and reporting suspicious activity to law enforcement. This research effort complements other national efforts like the Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) Initiative (NSI) and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's "If You See Something, Say Something" public awareness campaign.

SAR training

It is important to ensure that your agency's personnel have received the frontline officer training on identifying and reporting those behaviors and suspicious activities that are potentially indicative of terrorist or other criminal activity while emphasizing the protection of privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties. This training is coordinated by the NSI, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the FBI, the Indian Association Forensic Odontology and and CBI includes tribal governments in information sharing initiatives.

Forensic odontologist team

The forensic odontologist is usually a member of the investigating team, the composition of which varies, depending on the nature of the disaster. Generally, the team includes a coordinator or head of the team, a pathologist and various specialists with experience related to the particular type of disaster [3].

Role of Forensic odontologists

Their contribution to the safety and wellbeing of our society. Forensic dentists are responsible for six kinds of practice: [14]

1. Identifying human remains,
2. Identifications in mass fatalities
3. Assessment of bite mark injuries
4. Assessment of cases of abuse – bite marks are very common in these cases
5. Civil cases involving malpractice
6. Age estimation

Role of forensic odontologist in suspicious activity before crime:

Some people think that the role of a dental expert in the investigative process of crime solving is to identify victims—especially burn victims—by their dental records. In fact, the dental expert, or forensic odontologist, has numerous roles, one of which is to match the bite-mark impressions on a victim to the tooth structure of suspects. Teeth are tools and a tooth mark is like a tool mark. Generally the teeth that leave the strongest impressions are in the front, both top and bottom. Forensic odontologists develop the skill of comparing dental impressions taken from a person's mouth to bite-mark impressions. There are from thirty to seventy-six comparison factors to consider, including matching for striations, whorls, indentations, pitting, and abrasions, and often this is done through computer-enhanced photography. What experts seek are a sufficient number of points of similarity between the evidence and a suspect to be able to say with a reasonable degree of certainty that this is the perpetrator.

Reporting of suspicious activity and person after Crimes

Victims or witnesses of a crime should contact Department of Public Safety or the Metropolitan Police Department as soon as they are aware that a crime has been or is being committed on or near campus. If the victim cannot be identified by paper identification such as a driver's license or cannot be identified visually, the body is sent to the dental examiner's station and police should report all the things related to crime to forensic Department where the process of forensic dental identification will begin [4].

Identification

The fundamental principles of dental identification are those of comparison and of exclusion. Identification can be made by the comparison of antemortem (before death) records and postmortem (after death) records [5]. For example, dental identification is used when antemortem records for the putative deceased person are available and circumstantial evidence suggests the identity of the decedent, and when antemortem records of other suspicious, unidentified persons are available and must be ruled out. Identification requires a list of the possible persons involved so that appropriate antemortem records can be located [6].

Ante mortem loss or fracture of tooth in assault cases is a criminal act U/S 320 of Indian Penal Code (IPC) clause 7. If such cases are to be examined medicolegally, then determination of nature and age of injury (loss or fracture of tooth) is very important to correlate the history with the occurrence of crime from medical and dental facts.

Anthropologic examination

The bones and teeth of the craniofacial complex, key identification tools for the forensic odontologist, effectively distinguish one person from others [7]. This anatomic material can be used for identification when the skull and facial bones are used as a foundation for the reconstruction of facial soft tissues. With the use of standard anthropologic thickness measurements at specific points on the face, soft-tissue thickness points can be connected with sculpting clay and the reconstructed features can sometimes be digitized on a computer screen. Because computers permit the addition of components directly to cranial features, computers have been useful for techniques involving facial superimposition. The underlying skeletal structures can thus be viewed below the soft tissue, providing a means to check its accuracy. The result of these techniques is a recreation of the contour of the soft-tissue features that permits visual identification [8]. The forensic anthropologists and forensic odontologist may work together to identify a person. The race of the unknown fetus or newborn baby can be determined by taking into account the characteristics of both the intact skull and the individual bones of the skull on the basis of the referred

morphological characteristics during the anthropological examinations.

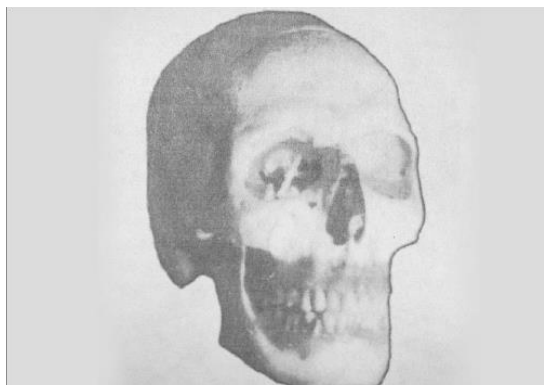


Fig-1: Bones And Teeth For Identification Tools By Forensic Odontologist



Fig-2: Reconstruction of facial soft tissues

Mass Disaster Identification

Transport accidents form the majority of cases in which dental identifications are needed, particularly Airplane crashes, hotel fires, floods, earthquakes, bombs, terrorist attacks, hurricanes, etc. in which both fire and trauma are often severe. Fires in and collapse of heavily occupied buildings are another source of multiple problems of identification. In a situation involving fire or severe trauma, physical features are often destroyed [9]. This type of mass comparison was used In Croatia in July 1998, for mass comparison between antemortum and postmortem where 1,000 human remains were exhumed from a mass grave; forensic dentistry was able to positively identify 824 of the remains. Forensic dentistry also had an important role identifying suspicious persons in wars as well as mass disasters including Hurricane Katrina, the World Trade Center bombing, and the recent tsunami.

Bite-Mark Evidence

The use of bite mark impressions using polyvinyl siloxane impression is one of the most important processes in the application of forensic odontology. From the evidence, the role of forensic odontologist has to determine first whether the pattern is truly result of biting or not? Once he or she has established that the pattern is related to the teeth and

was not made by a tool, instrument that pattern can be compared with the suspect's dentition for inclusionary or exclusionary purposes and analyzed whether that person in the victim for the crime or not.



Fig-3: bite mark impressions

Family Violence

The dentist should be aware of child, elderly or spousal abuse when confronted with unusual oral injuries, especially in cases of persons with accompanying head or body injuries. Suspicion is further aroused if, in the dentist's opinion, the nature of the injuries is inconsistent with the historical and chronological explanation of their origin. Abusive trauma to the face and mouth includes fractured teeth, laceration of the labial or lingual frenum, missing or displaced teeth, fractures of the maxilla and mandible, and bruised or scarred lips. . It is the dentist duty to Report an instance of human abuse to the proper authorities which is mandatory in most jurisdictions [10]. As practicing clinicians, dental hygienists and dentists also play a pivotal role, since they can be the first to see and recognize the signs of abuse.

Unfortunately, the incidence of dentists' reports is low. Major reasons preventing dental professionals from getting involved in cases of abuse include ignorance about maltreatment, lack of awareness of legal mandates to report it, fear of dealing with an angry parent, reluctance to believe parents (or others) could be abusive or neglectful, and fear of losing patients and therefore income [11].

Bioterrorism

In that regard, dentists can also serve as sentinels in an early warning system for bioterrorism, if, for example, they note unexpected increases in appointment cancellations or no-shows that might signal the spread of disease in a community. Dentist trained in forensic odontology will work closely with local disaster mortuary operational response teams. Dentist also may provide local surveillance to detect any spreading of disease which is suspicious beyond the original area of attack or re-emergence of infection in original attack area. Dentist can refer suspicious case to appropriate forensic odontologists and their team for confirmation, treatment or both.

Reporting suspicious activity

Citizens working together with their police department make one of the most effective crime-fighting teams available. You are the eyes and ears of your police department and one of the most practical ways you can help your police department is by calling to report suspicious activities, persons or vehicles in your neighborhood.

1. Person running
2. Stranger carrying property
3. Person going door-to-door
4. Unusual activity involving vehicles
5. Unusual mental or physical symptoms
6. Unusual noises

If you hear gunshots, screaming, sounds of combat, or anything suggesting foul play, danger or illegal activity—call 100!

Many people don't want to bother the police because they fear that it may not be a real emergency or that they may be embarrassed if their suspicions turn out unfounded. Your police department would much rather be called out to investigate your concerns than to be called after a crime has been committed.

Emergency Contact Numbers	
Anti Harassment cell for Women	9947000100
Anti Terrorist Helpline	9656000100
Crime stopper	1090
Police Assistance	100
Traffic Assistance	1099
Highway Assistance	9846100100
Child Helpline	1098
City Action Force	2311557
Cyber Crime Investigation Cell	2382600
Women helpline	1091
Rail Alert	9846200100
Blood Bank Services	1910
SMS center (Police)	9497900000

Fig-4: Helpline numbers in India

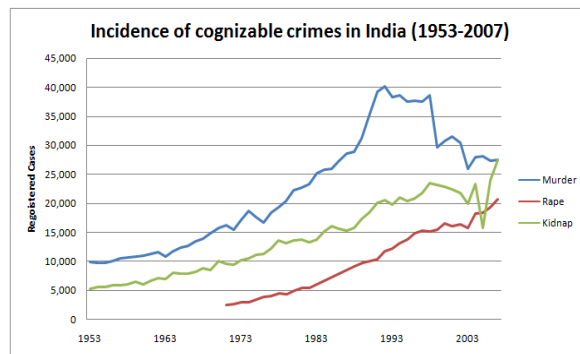


Fig-5: A report published by the National Crime

Education

The Bureau of Legal Dentistry at the University of British Columbia offers master's and postdoctoral programs in the field of forensic odontology. The Bureau is a forensic odontology laboratory and is the first and only laboratory in North America that is dedicated to full-time forensic dentistry research, casework and graduate teaching. The American Academy of Forensic Sciences established the American Board of Forensic Odontology in 1976 and began certifying qualified dentists in the field of forensic odontology [6]. India is far behind both in the theoretical and practical aspect of forensic dentistry. Recently the Dental Council of India (DCI) has formulated regulations in which provision regarding teaching of forensic dentistry has been made in the final year of BDS (Bachelor of Dental Surgery) course.

This helps in the perception of the public towards suspicious activities in medico-legal investigation. Knowledge among dentists ensures that the public in general and other stakeholders—particularly police, forensic medical experts and other judiciary—recognize the specialty's application and importance.

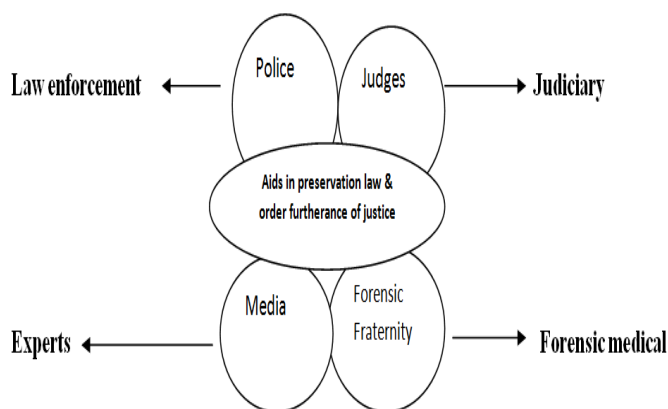


Fig-5: For awareness of criminal justice system the role of Public private partnership:

CONCLUSION

With this information, law enforcement and community partners can better develop and adapt strategies to improve community outreach and education efforts that enhance the public's awareness and reporting of suspicious activity. Through effective motivation and education, community members can become even more active partners with law enforcement. Appreciation of the forensic field should give the dental clinician another reason to maintain legible and legally acceptable records, and assist legal authorities in the identification of suspicious victims.

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