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Forensic Dentistry in Cork
A look at the past three years

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Background

An important role of the forensic dentist is in the identification of the deceased. Dental identification has proved to be extremely useful and reliable and is quicker and less expensive than DNA identification. The identification of individuals missing for prolonged periods can bring closure to family members and allow burial of the remains.

The objective of this poster is to describe the application of forensic dentistry in Cork University Hospital to identify human remains over a three year period.

Key words: Forensic dentistry, record-keeping, Ante mortem, Post mortem

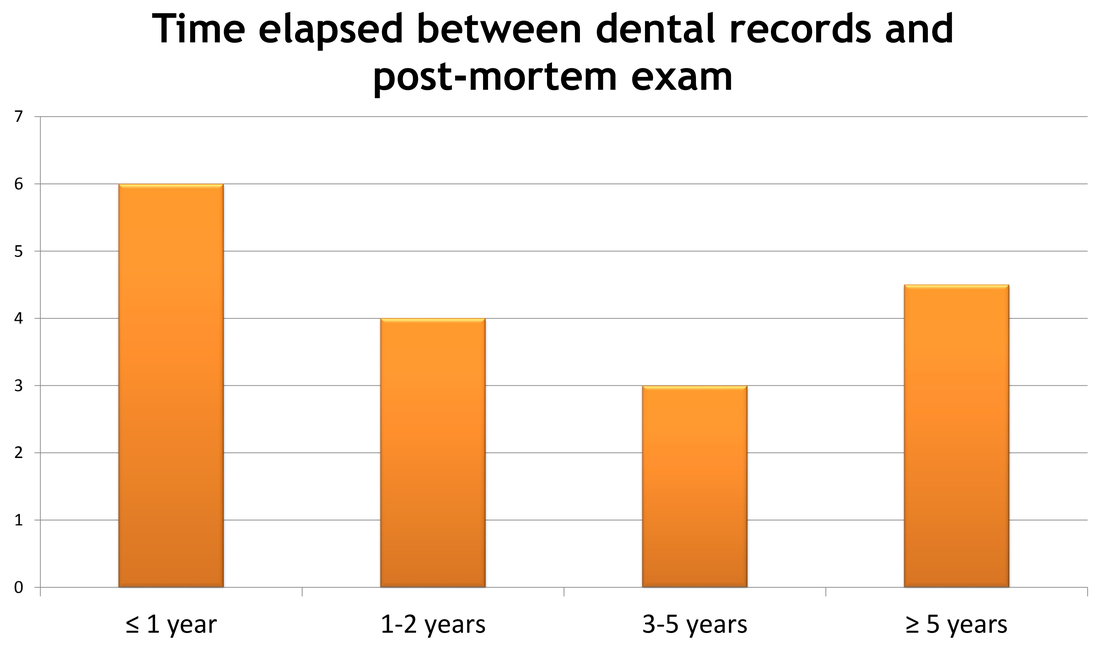
Methods

The ante mortem and post-mortem dental records of deceased persons examined over a three year period in Cork University Hospital were reviewed and data extracted by two independent reviewers.

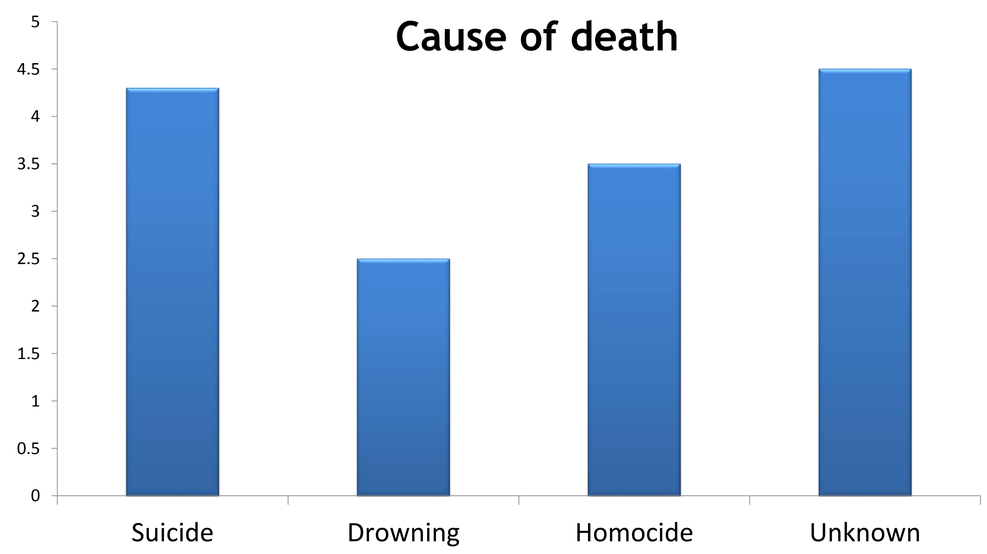
Results

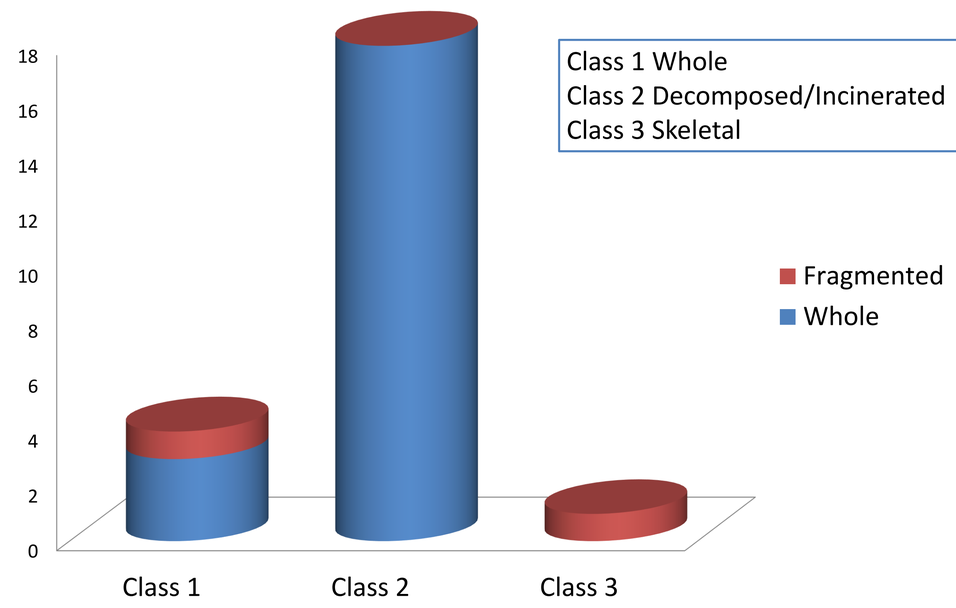
Forensic odontology was requested for 23 (21 M, 2 F) deceased persons over a two year period. 19 of these were successfully identified using ante-mortem dental records, 1 was subsequently identified using DNA testing and three are unidentified to date.

The mean age of those identified was 45.6 years (range 33-75). Dental records were available for 19 cases, 17 of these were in English and two were in Polish. Dental radiographs were available in 11 cases. The time elapsed between the ante-mortem dental records available and the post-mortem examination was on average 4.4 years (range 1 to 17 years).



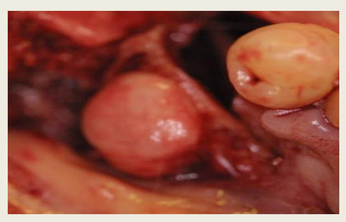
Of the 19 sets of ante-mortem dental records obtained, 11 were judged to be of satisfactory quality and detail to enable comparison and identification. Four sets of notes were of fair quality but were lacking in details or had reconcilable errors (e.g. mis-charting a first molar as a second molar). Four sets of dental records were of poor quality with little or no detail or charting.





Dental features which aid identification

Post mortem records



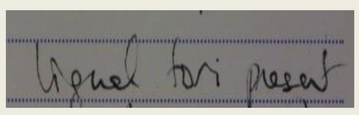
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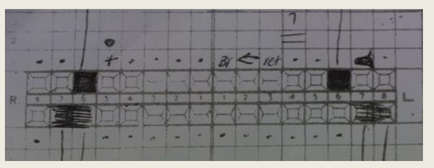


Fixed prosthodontics



Direct restorations







Ante mortem records

Common charting error



Conclusions

Comparing ante mortem and post mortem dental records is a reliable method of identification of human remains.

There is a need to emphasise the importance of good contemporaneous dental record keeping.

Every effort should be made to obtain the most recent as well as historical dental records.

Acknowledgements

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