

Indian Association of Forensic Odontology (IAFO) Report for 2013-14

Based on an invitation received by the President of the IAFO from the Director of the Centre for Forensic and Legal Medicine at the University of Dundee in Scotland, UK, to send a representative from the IAFO to their institution for an exchange of ideas on postgraduate curriculum and research collaboration, the Honorary Secretary of the IAFO was designated as its representative for the visit, which was undertaken on 19–30 May 2013. Extensive discussions related to teaching, curriculum, research and faculty opportunities were held, the details of which were circulated to all members of the IAFO in June 2014. During the discussions in Dundee, the Director of the Centre for Forensic and Legal Medicine mooted the proposal for a Scottish Travel Prize wherein presentations made at the 11th IAFO Conference would be eligible for an all-expenses paid academic trip to the University of Dundee. This information was circulated, highlighted on the IAFO website as well as the 11th IAFO National Conference website.

On 21–22 September 2013, the 11th IAFO National Conference was organised in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, by SIBAR Dental College of Guntur. Thanks to the able support of the management and the organising committee, the members of the IAFO, faculty members of various dental institutions in the country, and enthusiastic students interested in this specialty, the conference was a grand success and attended by approximately 200 delegates. A panel of three judges appointed by the IAFO—comprising of the Immediate Past President, its Secretary, and the 11th IAFO Conference Scientific Chairman—screened all abstracts of the scientific presentations of the conference and shortlisted five of the best. The shortlisted abstracts were emailed to faculty members of the University of Dundee for selection of a winner. Dr. Akanksha Ananthaswamy, an MDS student of Oral Medicine and Radiology at MR Ambedkar Dental College, Bengaluru (Bangalore) was chosen as winner of the Scottish Travel Prize for her presentation entitled, “Frontal sinus as an aid in personal identification—a digital radiographic study”. She was scheduled to visit Dundee in May 2014.

As before, 2013-14 saw the IAFO grow steadily, with 42 life memberships added (the number stands at 260 as of 31 March 2014). Enquiries regarding membership to the IAFO continued, as did enquiries concerning pursuing study in forensic odontology. All interested were given relevant information, encouragement and guidance so that the subject of forensic dentistry gained and participation in it was maximised. In addition, those interested were also given a platform to gain skills through the organisation of workshops—with one in King George Medical University, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, undertaken on 26–27 April 2013 in collaboration with the IAFO. This workshop attracted about 300 participants. Several other workshops were organised around India in which members of the IAFO served as resource faculty.

With regards to the functioning of the IAFO, the Office-bearers and Executive Committee (EC) members have been in continual communication and discussion with each other concerning the association's activities and development. Following its EC Meeting on the sidelines of the 11th IAFO conference, the EC met in Bengaluru on 12 January 2014 to discuss a range of issues. The IAFO Office has been in touch with IAFO members as well, providing updates on continual forensic dental education programmes and conferences organised at national and international levels. This led to a record acceptance of six papers/posters for presentation at the International Organisation for Forensic Odontostomatology's August 2013 International Congress in Florence, Italy, where Indians participated in record numbers contributing to innovations in the subject. India and the IAFO arrived on the international stage. Also, with a view to keep members updated in the latest scientific developments in the specialty, the IAFO started circulating citations of forensic odontology and related articles from reputable international journals. And last but not the least, the IAFO and its members have contributed positively in serving justice in a landmark criminal case in India wherein forensic dental evidence was used. Perhaps for the first time, forensic bite mark evidence's application has been acknowledged nationally and, importantly, accepted by the Indian courts of law. Jai Bharat.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Ashith B. Acharya, B.D.S., G.D.F.O.

Honorary Secretary, IAFO

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