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## Scope of forensic odontology in Indian scenario !

In the landscape of forensic sciences in India, forensic odontology has emerged as a critical component of forensic science. The application of dental knowledge in a legal context has emerged as a formidable tool in the hands of forensic investigators. From bite mark analysis to dental records, its applications are diverse and impactful. In this editorial, we navigate through the current state of forensic dentistry in India, exploring its potential, challenges, and the path forward.<sup>1</sup>

The growth of forensic odontology in India is evident through the establishment of dedicated forensic odontology departments in various medical and dental institutions across the country. Furthermore, technological advancements like digital imaging, 3D printing, and computer-assisted tools have enhanced the precision and efficiency of dental analysis.<sup>2</sup> These technologies aid in the reconstruction of dental profiles and enable forensic odontologists to collaborate seamlessly with other forensic experts, fostering an interdisciplinary approach to crime solving.

This branch of Forensic science has shown its usefulness in crime scene investigations, civil matters related to age and identity as well as in mass disasters. Forensic odontologists need to lay emphasis on the importance of maintaining ethical standards<sup>3</sup> in dental record keeping which are an invaluable tool in antemortem assessments, research and practice and promoting transparency in the application of dental evidence in legal proceedings. There are many challenges which this field faces such as limited awareness among law enforcement agencies, the need for standardized protocols, and the importance of continuous education for forensic odontologists. Collaboration between dental and legal professionals, along with investment in research and development, can overcome these challenges and further strengthen the field.

Besides, there have been various attempts to promote the awareness and give practical trainings in this domain with the advent of various educative programmes, and short term course, of which one was conducted at Faculty of Dentistry, Jamia Millia Islamia in November 2023. Endeavours like this will not only promote the discipline, but also bring its importance on the forefront catching attention of policy makers and stakeholders to give forensic odontology its due share in the field of forensic science.

Forensic odontology in India is at a crucial juncture, witnessing increased recognition and growth. The integration of technological advancements, collaborative efforts, and addressing existing challenges can elevate the field to new heights. As forensic odontology continues to evolve, its role in the Indian judicial system is set to become even more prominent, contributing significantly to the pursuit of justice and truth.

### References

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