A picture is worth a thousand words - photo-documentation in child abuse

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Commentary:
Forensic odontology is a specialized branch of dentistry dealing with the legal aspects of professional dental practices and treatment. In particular, it emphasizes the use of dental records which are utilized in the identification of victims of crimes or mass disasters. Recognition of the pattern of injury, their interpretation and reporting augmented by photo documentation are an important tool in forensics. Photo documentation provides a lead in cases and conviction but with inherent limitations: Begin used as digital evidence it is a critical factor in solving the anonymities by providing critical information applicable to criminal and legal investigations1. Photo documentation shows the appropriate positioning and dimensions. Additionally, the procedure, cross complements other evidence collection techniques. Initially, manually operated camera and film strips were used, now digital technology is being adopted for recording and storing the visuals2. In earlier days, basic visible light photography provides the necessary information adequate for most of the cases related to dental identifications, but now, the emerging techniques of digital photography may be best exploited in evidence collection of legal cases.1 Photo documentation can be used to preserve the data for future reference also, as it could be a part of the patient’s medical record3.

This poster presents an overview and relevance of photographic documentation of child abuse cases globally for the identification, assessment, and management including forensic implications. In child abuse cases, there are significant differences in the photographs taken at the time of injury and after a period of 1 or 2 weeks. The variation in images of child abuse cases will interpret the unforeseen data of a victim to an investigator4. Hence, each photographic images can reveal the untold story of a victim of child abuse cases5.

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