



national science week 2013

Mithun Rajshekar

Forensic Dentist

Menzies Research Institute Tasmania

Teeth are very important parts of our body just like any other part of the body, but what makes teeth special is their versatility. Teeth are used in simple jobs like chewing food, assisting in speech and holding on to things. Teeth have also been used as tools and one such use of teeth as a tool is biting during an attack or in self-defence. Teeth leave marks when they come in contact with skin. These are called bitemarks.

Bitemarks have been used as evidence in courts for a long time now and human bite mark analysis has undergone vast levels of research. Previous researchers have identified that every human being has a unique set of dentition and this uniqueness can be used in identification of individuals just like fingerprints.



My research involves the identification of teeth marks left by dogs on human bodies. It involves me looking at animal bite marks to identify a dental signature that may be present for each animal just like the humans. This research will help us in identifying dogs that are involved in causing bite related injuries. I am working on individualization of animals based on their dental similarities and variations.

When I completed my Bachelor of Dental Surgery, I began working in a Dental Practice, but after 2 years I realised it wasn't my calling. I wanted to do more. I started off with my Masters in Forensic Sciences majoring in Dentistry and by the time I finished it I was hooked on being a research scientist.

I am currently working on this research project at the Menzies Research Institute Tasmania under the able guidance of some very good supervisors and I am looking forward to completing this project- that way I can start my next research project!

For further information: www.menzies.utas.edu.au

