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### Interview / Entrevista

#### Prof. PhD. PATRICK THEVISSEN



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#### Contact

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### CURRICULUM VITAE (SUMMARY)

- I became a Dentist in 1980 when I finished the undergraduation in Dentistry at Rijksuniversiteit Gent, Belgium.
- Since that time I work in the private dental practice.
- I became a Forensic Dentist in 2005 after obtaining a Master of Science degree in Forensic Dentistry at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KULeuven), Belgium.
- Few years later I obtained the Doctoral degree in Biomedical Sciences in the same institution on the research topic: Dental age estimation in sub-adults: Striving for an optimal approach.
- Since 2007, I work in the Forensic Dentistry Unit at the Department of Oral Health Sciences at KULeuven and became head of the unit in 2014.
- Currently, I divide my time between the private dental practice and the academic activities.
- Specifically, I teach Forensic Dentistry to international students in the Master course of Forensic Odontology at the KULeuven.
- My main areas of research are related to dental age estimation (of unaccompanied minors) and to prove the uniqueness of the human dentition both in bitemarks and human identification fields.
- As forensic odontologist I also provide services mainly related to identification, age estimation and bite mark casework.
- 30 publications and 355 citations in several forensic journals with high impact factor, specially: Forensic Science International, International Journal of Legal Medicine, Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine, Journal of Forensic Sciences, and Journal of Forensic Odonto-Stomatology: <https://lirias.kuleuven.be/cv?u=U0056624>.
- Editor of the Journal of Forensic Odonto-Stomatology.
- Member of the International Editorial Board of the Brazilian Journal of Forensic Odontology (RBOL)
- Treasurer of the International Organization of Forensic Odonto-Stomatology (IOFOS), 2014-2017: [http://www.iofos.eu/exec/executive\\_14-17.html](http://www.iofos.eu/exec/executive_14-17.html).

**(1) How did you become interested in Forensic Dentistry?**

I was always interested in research. I found in Forensic Dentistry a field with broad possibilities to work with science. Besides, Forensic Dentistry communicates with all the other fields in Dentistry and considerably supports most of the fields in Forensics, revealing an interesting multidisciplinary interface.

**(2) Who were the pioneers in Forensic Dentistry in Belgium?**

On scientific level Prof. Guy Willems is certainly an important name for the consolidation of Forensic Dentistry in Belgium. He introduced this specialty to the undergraduation in Dentistry and developed the Master of Forensic Odontology course at KULeuven ([www.mfo.be](http://www.mfo.be)). Further on, he was my promoter both during the Master and Doctoral programs as well as partner in research.

In applied Forensic Odontology Yvo Vermylen and Eddy De Valck were the Belgium pioneers on the field.

**(3) What is the status of Forensic Dentistry in Belgium, compared to other European countries?**

Forensic Dentistry is a well developed specialty in Belgium. The development of the specialty is mainly expressed with the theoretical and practical support that we have. The theoretical development is constantly updated and challenged due to the scientific research performed at our unit and within the Master of Forensic Odontology course, which is strongly designed towards research and improvement of knowledge in the field. The practical support is founded by the use of high-tech forensic performance applying up to date facilities and devices, enabling to perform for example virtual autopsies, forensic three-dimensional (3D) digital facial reconstructions, 3D bitemark analysis, and dental age estimation with microscopic exam.

**(4) What is your perspective for the development of Forensic Dentistry in Europe for the next decades?**

I believe Forensic Dentistry is a growing field in Europe. Dentistry students are becoming more aware

of the importance of this specialty and are searching for specialized training. Based on that they are able to inform the governmental and legal authorities in their home country about the specific services that forensic odontologist can offer to the community. Additionally, forensic odontologists may be integrated in national disaster victim identification teams (DVI) and consulted to organize and establish age estimations of young unaccompanied fugitives entering the European Community countries.

**(5) What is your main research topic and how does it contribute to Forensic Odontology?**

My main research topic in Forensic Dentistry is the dental age estimation. During the last years I dedicated my efforts to assess several issues within the dental age estimation area, such as the influence of sampling different populations; applying different techniques and methods; and modifying the statistical analyses. I believe this field plays an important part nowadays within the increasing globalization trend. Migration became more common and the

demand for age estimation exams proportionally increased. A second important research field is to scientifically proof the uniqueness of teeth / the dentition. Until now this issue is assumed to be true. It implicates that no identification or bite mark examination can give 100% proof of its result as long as no scientific proof exists that no 2 individuals in the world have the same teeth / dentition.

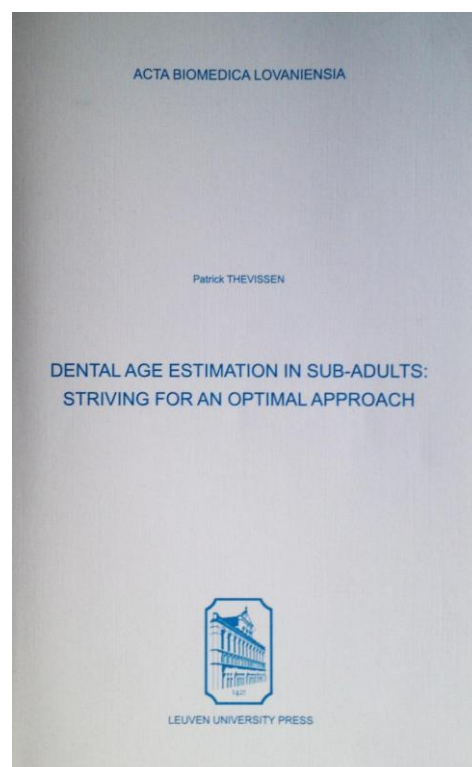


Figure 1 – Book cover of the Doctoral thesis (2013).

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