

I Encontro Nacional Sobre DNA Forense

April 6–7, 2000, Maceió, Alagoas, Brazil

by *Gabriela Saldanha*
Promega Corporation
gsaldanha@promega.com

The First Brazilian Meeting for Forensic DNA typing laboratories was held in Maceió, Brazil, from April 6–7, 2000. Over 100 scientists and public officials attended, representing 19 states from all regions of Brazil. Over the course of the two-day meeting, speakers from 10 different laboratories described their DNA typing experiences. The conference was sponsored by Biobrás Diagnósticos do Brasil and Promega Corporation, as part of an effort to support the education and training of scientists and public officials in Brazil. The main objective of this meeting was to expand discussions about the major scientific advances in DNA typing for human identification.

On the first day of the meeting Dr. Roberto Mauro Gil de Lima, Scientific and Sales Support, Biobrás, presented a brief history of DNA typing for human identification. He was followed by Dr. Luiz Antonio Ferreira da Silva, Universidade Federal de Alagoas (UFAL), and Dr. Elizeu Fagundes Carvalho, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), who presented information on forensic issues in their laboratories. Dr. Karla Angélica Alves de Paula, Divisão de Pesquisa de DNA Forense (DPDNA), Polícia Civil do Distrito Federal, presented a comparative study of criminal cases using silver and fluorescent STR systems. Gabriela de Medeiros Saldanha from Promega Corporation provided a summary of the available silver and fluorescent STR systems. Dr. Luiz Carlos Buarque de Gusmão (UFAL/IML) focused on the technical and legal problems of collecting biological samples in Brazil, and then Dr. Norma Sueli Bonaccorso (Instituto de Criminalística de São Paulo) presented the procedures used to collect biological samples regulated by the Resolution SSP-194 de 02 de Junho de 1999. Dr. Mario Hirata presented a comparative study on the use of different DNA extraction methods from bones of various origins and ages. All participants concluded the day with a social dinner.

The final day of the meeting featured talks on various aspects of establishing and operating a DNA typing laboratory. Captain Patrick McCutcheon, Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office, West Palm Beach, Florida, USA, and his staff, presented the procedures used to collect, preserve, handle and identify samples at crime scenes. In the afternoon, Dr. Roberto Mauro Gil de Lima presented the measures taken when setting up a DNA Typing laboratory, including a list and cost of equipment needed. The day ended with a visit to a laboratory at the Universidade Federal de Alagoas (UFAL), to observe the steps involved in the process of human identification using STR analysis followed by silver stain detection.

Over the past several years laboratories throughout Brazil have been working to implement DNA typing technology for use in forensic casework. In spite of difficulties with the Brazilian economy in the last 2 years, many labs are now well established and are doing quality work. This meeting allowed these labs to share their experiences and to help each other improve their laboratory operations and practices. For newer labs, this kind of meeting is particularly important as it provides examples of success that can be emulated.

Upcoming Meetings

2nd EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF FORENSIC SCIENCE MEETING

September 12–16, 2000

Cracow, Poland

Internet:

www.ies.krakow.pl/conferences/enfsi/0.htm

SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF FORENSIC SCIENTISTS

September 10–13, 2000

Asheville, North Carolina

Internet:

www.southernforensic.org/ashville.htm

11th INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON HUMAN IDENTIFICATION

October 10–13, 2000

Biloxi, Mississippi

Internet:

www.promega.com/geneticsymp11/

NORTHEASTERN ASSOCIATION OF FORENSIC SCIENTISTS

October 11–14, 2000

Saratoga Springs, New York

Internet:

www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/Lab/5122/anmeeting.html

MIDWESTERN ASSOCIATION OF FORENSIC SCIENTISTS

October 16–20, 2000

Chicago, Illinois

Internet:

members.aol.com/MAFSWeb/index.html