



Mitch Holland (left) and Walther Parson (below) held a workshop on Mitochondrial DNA analysis on June 9.



Attendees gather on the conference center terrace during a break in the symposium proceedings.

(L-R): Dr. Pavel Ivanov (speaker), Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia; Professor Angel Carracedo (moderator), Institute of Legal Medicine San Francisco, Santiago de Compostela, Spain; Dr. Peter Gill (speaker), Forensic Science Service, Birmingham, UK; Professor Svante Pääbo (speaker), Max-Planck-Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig, Germany. Photograph by Dr. Jim Schumm, Promega Corporation.

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The Second European Symposium on Human Identification

June 10-12, 1998

By Randy Nagy,
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Innsbruck, Austria provided a beautiful setting for the *Second European Symposium on Human Identification*, which was held at the Innsbruck Congress from June 10-12, 1998. One hundred and seventy-five people, representing over 30 countries, attended the symposium. A total of 29 speakers gave talks on different aspects of DNA typing and 57 scientific posters were presented over the course of the three-day meeting.

Prior to the Symposium, on June 9, Mitch Holland (Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, USA) and Walther Parson (Institute for Forensic Medicine, Innsbruck, Austria) held a workshop on mitochondrial DNA analysis. The workshop featured 14 speakers, and 95 people from a total of 21 countries attended.

Presentations at the symposium covered topics ranging from *Alu* insertion polymorphisms to Y-chromosome microsatellites. A number of presentations focused on databasing DNA samples. Peter Schneider from Mainz, Germany, gave an overview of the current situation regarding the development of DNA databases in Europe. Currently, the Netherlands (1997), Austria (1997), Germany (1998) and the United Kingdom (1995) have databases set up. The UK DNA database contains over 280,000 samples collected for any recordable offense. The Netherlands' database contains 200 DNA samples from offenders and 400 unknown suspect samples. There are 4,500 suspect samples in the Austrian database, and the German database has just begun to receive samples. A number of countries, including Norway, Belgium, Switzerland, France, Sweden, Denmark and Finland, have plans to start DNA databases. Future developments will include a pan-European database of sexual offenders. Bruce Budowle and Jennifer Smith (FBI) also presented information on the US National Database and the unique identification of body fluid stains using DNA profiling.

Other presentations included a talk by Peter Gill of the Forensic Science Service (UK) entitled "*Distinguishing between alleles, artifacts and genetic anomalies in mixture interpretation*". In this presentation Dr. Gill provided a six-step process involving analysis of peak balance and the size of minor peaks for the interpretation of results and determination of the presence of mixtures.

Peter de Knijff (University of Leiden, Leiden, the Netherlands) gave a presentation on the characteristics and application of Y-chromosome microsatellites in population genetics. His reasons "*Why to use Y*" included the fact that the Y-chromosome is uniparental, has simple haplotype reconstruction and is sensitive to genetic drift. Another speaker on this subject, Lutz Roewer (Institute fur Gerichtliche, Berlin, Germany), focused on Y-chromosome analysis and mutation rate.

Mitochondrial DNA was the topic of three oral presentations. The use of mini-primer sets and mini-sequencing was presented. Mark Wilson (FBI) gave an update on casework experience using mitochondrial DNA.

There were presentations on new technologies including time-of-flight mass spectrometry, capillary electrophoresis and pentanucleotide repeats. The meeting concluded with a two-hour workshop given by Barry Brown (FBI) on the CODIS program.

Participants at the *Second European Symposium on Human Identification* received the latest information on DNA typing procedures, a glance at new things to come and an overview of how different countries are incorporating DNA typing technology into their laboratories. This was all done in a very picturesque city. The food was wonderful and the views breathtaking. We look forward to hosting the *Third European Symposium on Human Identification* in the year 2000.

Upcoming Meetings

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF CRIMINALISTS

October 14-17, 1998

San Diego, California

Internet:

www.criminalistics.com/CAC

SOUTHWESTERN ASSOCIATION OF FORENSIC SCIENCES

October 19-24, 1998

Little Rock, Arkansas

NORTHEASTERN ASSOCIATION OF FORENSIC SCIENTISTS

November 5-7, 1998

Newport, Rhode Island

Internet:

[www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/
lab/5122/neafs01.htm](http://www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/lab/5122/neafs01.htm)

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF FORENSIC SCIENCES

February 15-20, 1998

Orlando, Florida

Internet:

www.aafs.org