

## Accepted Manuscript

Title: Estimating age and synthesising growth in children and adolescents using 3D facial prototypes

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PII: S0379-0738(18)30078-1  
DOI: <https://doi.org/doi:10.1016/j.forsciint.2018.02.024>  
Reference: FSI 9182

To appear in: *FSI*

Received date: 12-9-2017  
Revised date: 20-2-2018  
Accepted date: 23-2-2018

Please cite this article as: H. Matthews, A. Penington, J. Clement, N. Kilpatrick, Y. Fan, P. Claes, Estimating age and synthesising growth in children and adolescents using 3D facial prototypes, *Forensic Science International* (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.forsciint.2018.02.024>

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1 Estimating age and synthesising growth in children and adolescents using 3D facial  
2 prototypes

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## 18 Abstract

19 3D facial images are becoming increasingly common. They provide more information about  
20 facial form than their 2D counterparts and will be useful in future forensic applications.

21 These include age estimation and predicting changes in appearance of missing persons  
22 (synthetic growth). We present a framework for both age estimation and synthetic growth of  
23 children and adolescents from 3D photographs. Age estimation accuracy was substantially  
24 better than for existing approaches (mean absolute error = 1.19). Our synthetically 'grown'  
25 images were compared to actual longitudinal images of the same cases. On average 75% of  
26 the head overall and 85% of the face were predicted correctly to within three millimetres. We  
27 find that our approach is most suitable for ageing children from late childhood into  
28 adolescence. The work can be improved in the future by modelling skin colouring and taking  
29 account of other factors that influence face shape such as BMI.

30 Keywords: Facial growth; age estimation; synthetic growth; missing persons

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