



Pathology/Biology Section - 2015

H56 Autoerotic Accidental Death by Self-Inflicted Asphyxia by Body-Wrapping in a Plastic Curtain

Claudia Rosa, MD, S.C. Medicina Legale, ASL TO2, via Pacchiotti 4, Torino 10146, ITALY; Roberto Testi, MD, PhD, Via Lessona 54/12, Torino 10145, ITALY; Patrizia Mazzucco, MD, S.C. Medicina Legale, ASL TO1, via San Secondo 29 bis, Torino 10128, ITALY; and Paola A. Magni, PhD, University of Western Australia, Centre for Forensic Science, Myers St Bldg, 35 Stirling Highway, Crawley, Western Australia 6009, AUSTRALIA*

After attending this presentation, attendees will understand an atypical method of autoerotic death by self-infliction due to body-wrapping in a plastic curtain.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by providing data concerning an atypical method of self-inflicted asphyxia and the multidisciplinary approach to identify the causes and time-of-death.

Autoerotic accidental deaths are deaths occurring during solitary sexual rituals used to enhance sexual excitement. The majority of these fatalities involve the use of some type of apparatus that can enhance the sexual stimulation of the person, causing unintentional death. Hanging or self-inflicted suffocation are the most common forms of autoerotic accidental death.

In many cases, the diagnosis of autoerotic accidental deaths has been controversial and some cases have been classified as suicides with unusual features, rather than life-threatening accidents caused by sexual practices. The vast majority of autoerotic deaths are due to autoerotic asphyxia by hanging or by plastic bags (70% to 80%) and/or chemical substances (10% to 30%), but in approximately 5% to 10% of cases, atypical methods of autoerotic deaths are encountered (e.g., electrocution, overdressing/body-wrapping, foreign body insertion, and atypical methods of asphyxia).

In the present case, a 39-year-old man was found dead in his own apartment during the month of June, 2014, in Turin in northwest Italy. The door of the apartment was locked from the inside and no signs of forced entry were observed. The corpse was found on a bed, completely wrapped in a plastic curtain (typically used for showers). Both ends of the curtain were tied together, one end from the outside and the other end from the inside where the head was located. The curtain was laterally heat-sealed together using a hair straightener that was found on the floor close to a large number of empty beer bottles.

The body inside the sealed plastic curtain was found naked and in a supine position with the arms raised above the head. A plastic wrap was repeatedly rolled around his abdomen and three pieces of adhesive tape were tied to his penis. The body was highly decayed with body fluids spread over the bed and on the floor. Associated with this decomposition were blow fly (*Calliphora vicina* Robineau-Desvoidy, Diptera: Calliphoridae) larvae and pupae both inside and outside the sealed plastic curtain.

The death was considered as an autoerotic accidental death by self-inflicted asphyxia and not a suicide, even though it was determined that the subject was suffering some depression after he lost his job. In the context of this situation, the minimum time since death was established using the insects found on the body and in the surrounding area.

Asphyxia, Autoerotic, Body-Wrapping