

Bloodbath Posed by Husband - a Case Report

N. Pawar M^{1*}, M. PAWAR R²

¹ Department of Forensic Medicine, Dhanalakshmi Srinivasan Medical College and Hospital, Tamailnadu, India

² Department of Anatomy, Dhanalakshmi Srinivasan Medical College and Hospital, Tamailnadu, India

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ABSTRACT

Background: The corpse of a newly married woman was brought for the postmortem examination. It was having multiple stabs over the neck and chest. Incised wounds were there over the chest and both wrists, cutting the radial artery of either side. Total numbers of injuries were 107, comprising few injuries of post mortem nature.

Case Report: The case report highlighted the challenges for an autopsy surgeon in extricating, noting and describing such an exhaustive number of injuries with its corresponding internal injuries. Collecting and preserving the pertinent evidences out of the corpse would be the next challenge. Further, spotting out discrepancy with the number of injuries of an inquest report will remain as an additional task. Subsequently an autopsy surgeon also has to face griming questions in the Court of Law, as an expert witness.

Conclusion: This case report described the history in detail and explicated all the eventual solutions for autopsy surgeon.

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► *Implication for health policy/practice/research/medical education:* Bloodbath Posed by Husband

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1. Case History:

The corpse of a 28 year old newly married woman was brought for postmortem examination after an inhuman assault by her husband. The incident took place in bedroom earlier night where the corpse was found lying in a pool of blood, later in the morning (Figure 1). An accused husband was

untraceable that time. No weapon was obtained from the scene.

On postmortem examination an adult female dead body was found undressed except lingerie. Externally rigor mortis was noted well marked in whole body. Postmortem lividity was noted on the back and was fixed. Dried blood stains were present over the body at places. There were 107 external bodily injuries in total. It comprised of 39 stabs over the neck (Figure 2) involving the trachea, vessels, thyroid and cricoid cartilages internally. Penetrating and perforating type of stab wounds were noted with both of its angles acute. Its size varied from 2.5 x 1 cm x cavity deep to 3.5 x 2 cm x cavity deep/through and through. There

Corresponding author: N. Pawar M, MD. Assistant Professor, Department of Forensic Medicine, Dhanalakshmi Srinivasan Medical College and Hospital, Siruvachur, Perambalur District, 621113, Tamailnadu, India
E-mail: pawarrohini78@rediffmail.com

were stabs and incised wounds over the chest, abdomen and back. Incised wounds were also noted over the extremities. Dimensions of incised wound varied from 8.5 x 3 x 1.5 cm to 19 x 2 x 1 cm. Incised wound of size 8.5 x 3 x 1.5 cm over the right wrist (Figure 3) and 10 x 3.3 x 1.8 cm over the left wrist was seen (Figure 4). Radial artery of either side was cut. As per the spot inquest, there was an excessive bleeding noted at the scene of crime (Figure 1). One incised wound of 7.5 x 3 cm x subcutaneous tissue deep was also noted over the right thigh anteromedially. There was no mutilation of genitalia. Moreover there was no evidence of recent sexual intercourse. On internal examination multiple ribs were found fractured on either side. Both the lungs and heart had shown stab wounds. Left lobe of liver, stomach, right kidney, small and large intestines, together with the great vessels were found dented. Evidence of hemothorax, hemopericardium and hemoperitoneum was also noted. Final cause of death was issued as "Shock due to injuries to vital organs due to assault with double edged sharp cutting pointed object." During autopsy the following materials were preserved for further examination.

1. Blood for chemical analysis
2. Blood soaked dried gauze for blood grouping
3. Vaginal swab
4. Lingerie with dried blood stains for blood grouping.

2. Discussion:

A brutal murder with hundreds of wounds raised lots of suspicions for investigating team. Not only the perpetrator's injury inflicting tactics initially remain surreptitious but also the provoking reason. Thorough going postmortem examination (Autopsy) and comprehensive postmortem report undoubtedly played an essential role. Moreover it was appended with comprehensive investigation by the Police officials.

Female victims are more frequently killed with multiple stabs by relatives and may not even shows defence wounds (1). In most of the cases of closely related and in the



Fig. 1. It shows the Scene of Crime.



Fig. 2. It shows the multiple stab wounds over chest and neck.



Fig. 3. It shows the incised wound over right wrist.

absence of psychiatric disorder in the assailant, the motive was of a passionate type (2).



Fig. 4. It shows the incised wound over left wrist.

Almost 100 deaths of homicidal stabbing were analysed by Hunt AC and Cowling RJ. Authors shaded the light on the causation of the violence, the age and sex of both the victim and the assailant, the multiplicity of wounds and the weapons used. Analytical outcome of almost all of these are very close to reality of this case (3).

The concept of 'lust murder' has to be considered in this context. 'Lust murder' is a homicide in which the offender craves for erotic satisfaction by killing someone. It is the most common phenomenon among psychotic male serial killer (4). Offender finds something sexually attractive about the victim. It is termed as 'Ideal victim type' (IVT). Fantasies are a key component in lust murders and can never be completely fulfilled. The term is also used in a related but slightly different sense, to refer to an individual who gains sexual arousal from the act of committing murder, or has persistent sexual fantasies of committing murder, even if the murder in itself does not involve the genital mutilation, evisceration or necrophilia (5).

Lust murder was not ruled out due to its above mentioned facts. Confirmation was left in dark due to lack of behavioural information about the accused.

An autopsy surgeon may also counter challenges in mortuary while observing and

recording details of extensive injuries. Mainly with it's:

Exact numbers,

Exact dimensions,

Exact direction (tract of wound),

Age and nature (ante mortem/post-mortem),

Correlating internal injuries, Observation,

Collection and preservation of the trace evidences,

And discrepancy in numbers as per the inquest, if any.

After concluding the post-mortem examination, an autopsy surgeon also has to confront in the Court of law

To comment about-

Which single injury was sufficient to cause death?

Age and direction of individual injuries.

Nature and number of weapon used.

Exact cause of death.

3. Conclusion:

In the view of such an unusual medico-legal postmortem examination, all the hitches can be easily overcome with impeccable assisting commands. It can facilitate in observing, noting and recording the details of injuries. These are:

- Apprehending maximum possible photograph of the body and bodily injuries,
 - Tagging each injury with some decal while noting it,
 - Using pictorial diagrams in noting and comprising of comprehensive postmortem report,
 - For locating the exact direction (tract) of injuries; in situ dissection is of great help,
 - Taking the help of spectrophotometer and histopathology for confirming the age and the ante mortem and postmortem nature of injuries,
 - Observing, collecting and preserving at most foreign bodies from and over the body.
- These strategies will play an asset role for concocting comprehensive medicolegal postmortem report. Ultimately and undoubtedly it will succor a grander investigation.

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