

A Resuscitated Case of Attempted Strangulation

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ABSTRACT

In the scenario of alarming increasing cases of unnatural deaths due to strangulation and throttling the determination of cause of death has become difficult in some cases to forensic pathologist. But a case of attempted ligature strangulation which was safely resuscitated has been registered and studied. In this article an attempt has been made to discuss in detail about the various findings in relation to ligature strangulation concerned therein.

Keywords: Strangulation, ligature, homicide.

INTRODUCTION

Strangulation is one of the oldest and widely used methods of committing murder in Indian sub-continent. It is usually carried out by constricting the neck either with the hands or ligature. The motive behind all these cases is either homicide, sexual assault or robbery². The extent and type of pathological findings can often be correlated with the specific circumstances of the fatal event. While such correlations are never perfect, their use in forensic scientific investigations forms an important component of the substance of the experience investigators expertise. Deaths

resulting from violent asphyxia demonstrate a relative paucity of anatomic findings, nevertheless it is important to document the pathology present in such cases for the purpose of excluding other forms of trauma from the manner of death.

Strangulation and smothering are common methods in case of females for homicide and is usually associated with sexual assault. Ligature mark³ around the victims neck constitutes an extremely precious piece of evidence to arrive at a conclusion as to whether hanging or strangulation. Other important findings in cases of ligature strangulation are the marks of struggle over other parts of body.

Case Study

A rare case of attempted strangulation has been reported to Basaveshwar Teaching & General Hospital attached to M.R.Medical College, Gulbarga on 09.09.2009. A young girl aged about

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(Received on 15.05.2010, accepted on 17.06.2010)

18 years was brought to the casualty of Basaveshwar Teaching & General Hospital attached to M.R.Medical College, Gulbarga on 09.09.2009 by her mother and relatives with history of unconsciousness, convulsions and difficulty in breathing.

On Examination, clothes were torn, smeared with mud and grass. Scalp hairs were disturbed admixed with grass, mud and leaves. There was a conspicuous ligature on the neck, transversely placed measuring 17 cm x ½ cm x ½ cm, 8 cms below the ear lobe and over the thyroid cartilage

in the front. Ligature mark was present only on the anterior and sides of the neck and was absent on the back of the neck possibly due to thick hairs. Bruises (4-5 in number, reddish in color) over the right forearm were noted. Clinically she was cyanosed, tachycardia, difficulty in breathing and had altered consciousness. Genital examination showed no signs of recent sexual intercourse.

Treatment was immediately started by securing airway, IV fluids, antibiotics, steroids and suctioning was done to keep the airway clear. When enquired to the parents, they said that she



was mentally unsound and narrated that an attempt of rape has been committed. During that attempt she started shouting and screaming, during this conjuncture the accused have strangled her. When she became unconscious he left the scene thinking she is dead. By listening the scream her relatives and parents rushed to the spot and found her in an unconscious state with difficulty in breathing. They rushed to the hospital. However, she made a dramatic recovery after intensive care and treatment and was discharged from the hospital after 10 days.

CONCLUSION

With the present findings on the neck and other parts of the body, it is possible to ascertain that it is case of ligature strangulation along with an attempt of rape. This opinion would not have been possible without evidence of marks on neck and other struggle marks on other parts of the body

suggestive of homicidal circumstances and misruling the modesty. With this, we can conclude that strangulation is usually attempted on females, specially with an intention of sexual assault and robbery.

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