

Accidental strangulation with moving belt of electric motor- A Case Report

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Abstract

A 40 years old male was accidentally strangulated, when his clothes got caught in the belt of electric motor while working at the farm. He was brought dead in mortuary wing of hospital. Cause of death was given as fracture of cervical vertebrae as a result of ligature strangulation.

Key words: Accidental strangulation, Ligature mark, fracture

Introduction

Strangulation is a type of mechanical asphyxia due to constriction of neck by a ligature or hand, when a constricting force other than weight of body is applied. It is mostly homicidal in nature. Accidental Strangulation is rare, but it may occur when an article of clothing, neckband or cord is tightly drawn around the neck. This may occur in an epileptic or an intoxicated person who may be helpless in extricating himself from such tight encirclement of neck.¹⁻⁵

In present case, victim was operating electric motor in a farm, when his clothes suddenly got entangled in moving belt and death occurred on the spot.

Case Report

A 40 years old male was brought dead in mortuary wing of Department of Forensic

Medicine for autopsy with the alleged history of accidental ligature strangulation. White shirt, the deceased wearing, was torn at several places. Ligature mark was present around the neck. Rigor mortis was present in upper extremities. Postmortem staining was present at back, but was not fixed. Tongue was bitten between teeth.

On Examination Following injuries were detected

Ligature mark measuring 2cm x 2cm in dimension was present encircling the neck. Involvement of ligature mark was more on right side and about 13 cm square area of neck was spared on left side.(photograph 1)

On Dissection

*Ante mortem infiltration was present underneath muscle of neck. Thyroid muscles

Photograph I



Photograph II



were showing infiltration. Rapture of muscular sheet was present. Fracture of cervical vertebrae C2 and C3 was present. (Photograph 2)

*Reddish abrasion of size 8.5cmx3cm was present on right side of neck 3.5cm below injury

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No.1.

*Reddish abrasion of size 7cm x 4cm was present on left clavicle region.

*Reddish abrasion of size 4cm x 2cm was present on medial aspect of left arm.

Organ of deceased was found congested and sent for detection of intoxicant to chemical examiner. Cause of death was given as fracture of cervical vertebrae as a result of ligature strangulation.

Discussion

Case is typical of accidental strangulation by ligature. Generally strangulation is presumed to be homicidal unless proved otherwise. In medico legal literature, only few case of accidental ligature strangulation is reported⁶. Looseness of clothes, intoxication and epileptic condition act as key factor in entrapping the person in such event, more ever force and pressure of operating machinery prevent the escape of person from clutches of death^{1, 5}. Precaution while handling these instruments can save precious life of person.

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