



G56 Postmortem Findings in 22 Victims Due to Two Grain Silo Explosions in France

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The goals of this presentation are to describe and recognize the injuries and types of wounds resulting from explosions.

Silos located on industrial sites in Metz and Blaye, France and containing barley grain exploded; the first on October 18, 1992 in Metz and the second on August 20, 1997 in Blaye. In total there were 25 victims including 23 deaths (12 in Metz, 11 in Blaye) and one survivor in each case. This retrospective study concerns 22 cases, 11 at each site.

All 22 victims had multiple lesions due to the explosion and its consequences. The lesions demonstrated the effect of the blast associated with falling and projection of concrete fragments, heat, intoxication, and asphyxia. Death was instantaneous for all victims except one in whom the autopsy findings and complementary tests suggested an extremely short period of survival. The role of the forensic doctor is therefore essential and should be included in emergency plans in order to facilitate the initial assessment, shorten the time taken to identify the victims, and improve thanatological procedures. Although dust explosions in agrobusiness plants, particularly cereal units, are becoming more and more frequent, postmortem data are rare in the literature.

Explosion, Postmortem Findings, Injury