



Pathology Biology Section – 2003

G9 The Significance of Tattoos in Forensic Autopsy

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The attendees will learn the profile of tattoos in forensic autopsies in Istanbul, Turkey, and the importance of tattoos.

The oldest tattoos have been found on Egyptian mummies with tattoos of various body parts reflecting the profession, life style, psychological state and habits of the tattooed in the past. In recent years, tattooing has become fashionable among youngsters and revision of the significance of tattooing may be required, though tattooing still remains an important indicator of the particular peer group tendencies, life style, and personality traits.

In this study, the forensic autopsy records of the State Institute of Forensic Medicine, Ministry of Justice of Turkey were reviewed for 4 years (1998-2002) and those with tattoos were further evaluated. Data regarding the personal information, the cause and origin of death, tattoos, self destructive and figurative scars, and their locations and features were recorded in detail. The data were then analyzed and discussed within the scope of the literature.

Of the 10,966 forensic autopsies in that 4-year interval, 269 (2.4%) had tattoos. 10.4% were female and 89.6% were male. In both sexes, 25.3% were in the 21-25 year age group, 39.4% had self-destructive scars, and 1.8% had figurative scars. The frequencies of cause of death in descending order were as follow: 14.9% drug intoxication, 13.4% gunshot wounds, 13.4% stabbing, and 7% methanol intoxication.

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