



D33 A Tale of Two Toxicities: Death by Poisoning of Two Married Health Care Professionals

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand the importance of coordination of the efforts of, and consultation among, the varied disciplines involved in the investigation of a suspicious death with ambiguous findings, and in which intimate femicide is a possibility.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by demonstrating an appreciation of the value of well-coordinated multidisciplinary expertise into an ambiguous death.

This case vignette will present the results of an investigation into the sudden deaths of two married health care professionals, in which extensive consultation and teamwork were required in order to determine the cause and manner of the deaths.

This young, apparently happy couple had met at university. He was a physician who had recently completed his post-graduate training, and had taken up a teaching position in a tertiary center. She was a nurse, who had put her career on hold while she raised their young children. All members of the household were previously well.

One evening in early fall, emergency services were called by the physician, who reported that his wife had become unresponsive following an apparent seizure. She was transferred to hospital via ambulance, where she was pronounced dead after resuscitative efforts were unsuccessful. The coroner was notified of the case, and, because of certain findings, police became involved, and a forensic autopsy and laboratory tests were performed. Based on initial findings and an urgent investigative case conference, all manners of death (natural, accident, suicide and homicide) were plausible, and all possibilities required careful evaluation.

Two weeks after the death of his wife, the physician died suddenly at his office. There was considerable local media attention. His death was investigated by the same team, augmented by a consultation from Behavioral Sciences, and underwent further review within the Office of the Chief Coroner.

Drawing sound conclusions about the cause and manner of these two deaths required integration of the careful collection and scrutiny of physical evidence in tandem with the professional analysis of the subtleties of human behavior. The presentation will provide an overview of the contributions of each of the investigative disciplines, the manner in which the expert work was coordinated, and the final investigative conclusions about the circumstances surrounding these two deaths.

Toxicity, Domestic, Multidisciplinary