



Pathology & Biology Section – 2005

G62 Suffocation by Mistaken Use of a Biohazard Hood as a “Spit” Hood

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The goal of this presentation is to document a case of mistaken use of a biohazard hood as a spit hood resulting in suffocation, and show resulting experimental re-enactment of such use including time and oxygen studies.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by demonstrating the danger of the improper use of the device, and by presenting data related to time necessary to become severely compromised by improper use.

A 20-year-old male was found to be in possession of drug paraphernalia and was arrested. While being transported to the police station he became belligerent, combative, and attempted to spit on the transporting officer. He was restrained with a car seatbelt with his hands cuffed behind him; a biohazard hood was placed over his head to contain the spitting. On arrival at the police department 8-10 minutes later he was found unresponsive; resuscitation was unsuccessful and he was pronounced dead in the local hospital ER.

The Quick 2000 is a widely available biohazard escape hood, which has a nose clip, a mouthpiece for breathing and a tight neck dam. Breathing into the mask without use of the mouthpiece rapidly depletes the oxygen and increases CO₂. Informal experiments demonstrate severe air hunger in two to two and one-half minutes if the mouthpiece is not used. Data from more formal experiments with oxygen and CO₂ studies will be presented.

Asphyxia, Suffocation, Biohazard Hood