G17 TASER® Wound Progression in Two Deployment Modes

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After attending this presentation, attendees will have a better understanding of the wounds created by the TASER® X26 device.

This presentation will impact the forensic community by assisting in the identification of characteristic wound patterns created by the TASER® X26, the most commonly used conducted electrical weapon.

Introduction: Conducted electrical weapons are used by law enforcement to control violently resistive subjects. The TASER X26 is the most commonly used conducted electrical weapon. It can be used in the probe-deployment mode in which probes are fired from the device at the subject, or it can be used in the drive-stun deployment mode in which the device is physically touched to the subject. The two deployment strategies can create different signature wound marks. To date, there is no study that has attempted to catalogue and describe these marks.

Methods: Subjects were recruited from police training classes for the study. The subjects were to receive an exposure from a TASER X26 as part of their training class. Subjects were allowed to choose between the two deployment modes depending on the rules of their class. Subjects completed a screening questionnaire that included the Fitzpatrick scale. The exposures were five seconds or less. Subjects had photographs of the wounds taken after the exposure immediately, and at 24, 48, and 72 hours, as well as at one month.

Results: The two deployment strategies left differing marks. The probe deployment mode generally created circular superficial partial thickness burns. The drive-stun mode created variable marks depending on the movement of the subject which included irregular superficial partial thickness burns that may be paired at about 40 mm (the distance between the metal contact points on the device), but not necessarily so. This mode also created abrasions and contusions. Some subjects had persistent hyperpigmented marks at one month.

Conclusions: The two probe deployment modes left different marks. It may be important for forensic examiners to be able to distinguish these marks from other minor skin trauma. Studies such as these will help in this.

TASER®, Wound, Burns

 ** Presenting Author*