



Pathology Biology Section – 2009

G85 Traffic Accident Deaths? The Importance of Autopsy

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand Portuguese law which determines that a forensic autopsy in victims of traffic accidents must always be performed in cases of immediate death or death without medical assistance. The importance of the autopsy in these situations is obvious, since the accident is not always the cause of death. Situations of apparent victims of traffic accidents that were suicides or homicides have been described as well as natural deaths.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by presenting several practical cases of apparent traffic accident victims in which the autopsy presented some surprises and totally different situations from those initially expected.

The need of a full autopsy and the demanding of complementary exams in these cases, namely histological, must be emphasized, reminding the fact that several judicial errors can occur in countries where a forensic autopsy is not routinely performed. Insurance rewards can be incorrectly taken into account, homicides cannot be detected, an accidental aetiology can be given to a suicide situation.

Traffic Accidents, Autopsy, Natural Death