



### **D38 Evidence From Forensic Botany in Establishing Time of Death in Incarcerated Persons**

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After attending this presentation, attendees will be able to understand how prison and hospital records can be used to help in determining the time frame for deaths of inmates and patients as well as elimination of some possible suspects.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by providing a little used and inexpensive method for narrowing the possible time of death and suspect in a suspicious death when the victim is a confined person.

Two cases where prisoners were murdered were investigated. In one case, the prisoner was in a state prison. In the other, the person was confined in a prison for the criminally insane. Fellow inmates were suspected in both crimes.

In both cases stomach content samples were provided as well as autopsy reports. In both individuals, the digestive tracts appeared to be normal. Menus for the full days meals on the deaths of the prisoners were also provided.

The objective of this evaluation was to determine the last meal that was consumed by the prisoners in order to eliminate some suspects and to evaluate testimony given by fellow inmates about their whereabouts and their observations of the victims' movements around the time of their deaths.

In both cases it was determined the contents of the last meals could be defined. In one case, due to the condition of the stomach contents, it was determined that the prisoner was likely to have died shortly after meal consumption. In the second case, the nature of the last meal could be stated in comparison with the details of the prison menu; but there was a complicating factor. This prisoner was a hoarder. He had sequestered a great deal of food in his cell. However, the nature of the last known meal was still clearly indicated by the stomach contents. **Forensic Botany, Time of Death, Incarcerated Persons**