



Pathology Biology Section – 2011

G75 Survived Strangulation: A Case Report

*Paula C. Oliveira, MD**, Portuguese National Institute of Legal Medicine, Largo da Sé Nova, Coimbra, 3000-213, PORTUGAL; *Ana R. Pereira, MD**, Ladeira das Alpenduradas nº13A, Coimbra, 3030-167, PORTUGAL; *Rosario L. Silva, MD*, and *Graca Santos Costa, MD*, Portuguese National Institute of Legal Medicine, Largo da Sé Nova, Coimbra, 3000-213, PORTUGAL; and *Duarte N.P. Vieira, PhD*, Rua Antonio Jose de Almeida, No 117, Coimbra, 3000-044, PORTUGAL

The goal of this presentation is to analyze and discuss the injury pattern potentially associated with situations of survived strangulation and the various consequences that may result from them, based on real cases. This presentation will also attempt to determine, if findings and symptoms of victims can be intensity of the assault and the severity of strangulation and if general evaluation criteria can be established on the basis of objective findings.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by presenting severe survived strangulation cases researched, and introducing other cases described in literature. Difficulties usually exist in clinical forensic medicine regarding the interpretation of the findings in reference to the intensity and duration of the assault and, ultimately, the threat it represented for victim's life. This assessment is particularly important when conclusions must be drawn in the context of penal law, in order to allow the court to decide about the life risk involved in situations of aggression.

Cases Report: Several cases are presented involving different situations, from victims of assault to incidences of accidental self-inflicted strangulation. The majority the cases presented are of severe life-threatening strangulation that is cases with petechial bleedings on conjunctivae, mucosal surfaces and facial skin, as well as otorrhea, loss of consciousness, loss of urine, vomiting, etc.

Conclusions: The interpretation and significance of the injury pattern is discussed as well has the contribution that this pattern may give to a differential diagnosis between assault and self-inflicted strangulation and to the evaluation of the severity of the situation and the threat to life. Also stressed is the fact that forensic assessment must be as detailed as possible, due to the fact of a rapid change of the lesions pattern, with the risk of becoming impossible a correct interpretation of the facts. Finally, the transitory physical consequences of these situations and of the permanent results that may result from them, as well as of their contribution to an appreciation of the severity of the aggression will be discussed. The analysis of these cases also stress the importance, as previously stated by Plattner et al (2005), of a clinical and radiological examination in addition to the forensic examination. It also shows that applicability in forensic practice of the classification in three different degrees of severity of these situations, proposed by Plattner et al (2001).

Strangulation, Injury Pattern, Survival