



Pathology Biology Section - 2012

G16 Atypical Hanging Occurring in Two Sisters Within a Short Period of Time: Incidental, Sympathetic, or Something Else?

Khalid Jaber, MD*, Firebrigade Training Centre, Malahide Road, Marino, Dublin 3, IRELAND

After attending this presentation, attendees learn two cases of atypical hanging occurring in two sisters within a relatively short interval. Both sisters belonged to the Travellers' community of Ireland. Both were married and had sporadically difficult relationship with their husbands. When the paramedical staff first encountered these females separately, ligatures were not found around their necks.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by presenting the unusual death of two sisters through atypical hangings. Autopsy and scene photographs will be presented showing the atypical features of both deaths.

Case 1: The first sister was living with her husband (partner). She had experienced some fertility problems over the past two years prior to her premature death. Her husband somehow was never similarly and or concurrently investigated. She was brought to the near-by hospital, by her husband, clinically in a near hanging situation with unusual burn marks on her left thigh. She was unconscious, with Glasgow coma score of three, with no ligature *in situ*. She remained comatose for less than 24-hours before she expired. The husband's story was that he returned to the house after being away for 20 minutes and found his wife hanging by a rope from the pipe of a boiler unit in a small storage/utility room in an incomplete suspension. Her feet were on the floor. He rushed to remove the noose and loosen the alleged simple slip knot with no apparent difficulty, with one hand while supporting his wife with the other. Upon hearing gurgling noises he realized she was not dead so he called for help from neighbors and began administering CPR. He and his neighbor drove the wife to the hospital. She was admitted and an initial CT scan showed diffuse brain edema and features of hypoxic ischemic encephalopathy. She remained in hospital for less than 24-hours and expired the following day. Upon admission the hospital, nursing staff noted an unusual burn marks on the side of her left hip and thigh area. The features of the hanging marks and the burn marks are presented and discussed.

Case 2: Her sister, a mother of one child, was found dead in her Aunt's house where she sought shelter from her allegedly aggressive husband (partner). The latter apparently had physically assaulted her a few days earlier in her mother's home where she lived with her child. She was drinking with her alcoholic aunt the afternoon when she was found slumped on the floor with her head near the radiator in the center of the wall and her left leg leaning on the edge of the bed positioned along another wall. She was found with ligature marks around her neck by the residents of the house, but with no ligature *in situ*. The scene revealed two TV cables running along two corners of the room and coming from the attic space. The nearest cable to the body was found split at a previously cut point which was taped. The other cable was not considered by the scene investigators as a possible ligature. The features of the hanging marks and the burn marks are presented and discussed.

These two sisters were young females from the Travellers' community in Ireland. Both were married and had experienced uneasy and, at least, sporadically difficult marital life. Both were regular consumers of alcohol and both have been possibly clinically depressed.

Atypical, Hanging, Sisters