



### G71 Unusual Patricide: Case Report

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After attending this presentation, attendees will have a better understanding of the classification of homicide called case of patricide.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by stimulating discussion on whether or not mental illness should be considered a “trigger point” for offenders.

Patricide is defined as a homicide in which victims are parents and the killers are their children. “Patricide” is the definition given to the murder of father, while “matricide” refers to the murder of the mother. International literature reports that this crime is often associated with psychiatric morbidity and is usually committed by males. Patricide committed by sons is the most frequent form. In Italy, patricide is quite rare and it represents less than 3% of all murders (59% matricides and 41% patricides). The typical profile of the offender is a young adult male who is single and unemployed. The offender typically lives with victim (quite often an old and disabled person), and is suffering from mental illness with co-morbidity of alcohol or drug consumption and/or abuse. Usually he is not able to separate himself from his parents or to assume responsibilities. The homicide usually takes place at home at the end of an argument, and common tools found in the house are often used as weapons. A 73-year-old man was found dead at home, on the kitchen floor, after his son confessed the murder. He killed his father early in the morning, after yet another argument with him. He then called the police, and sat on the floor awaiting the officers, fully aware of his guilt. A pair of scissors and a cross-head screwdriver, both with traces of blood, and a wooden board were located close to the body. At crime scene, the victim was supine and showed multiple injury pattern. Clothes were raised upon the thorax and multiple thoracic-abdominal lesions were found together with bruises and abrasions of the head. The sternal area showed two larger stab wounds, while eleven penetrating cross-shaped puncture wounds affected precordial, epigastric, and mesogastric regions. Four other shallow, cross-shaped punctures of the skin surrounded these lesions. At autopsy, gross examination of organs showed visceral lesions with cardiac, hepatic, and intestinal involvement, widespread hemorrhagic infiltrates of cranial soft tissues, skull fractures (vault), and diffuse subarachnoid hemorrhages (SAH). Multiple and serial rib fractures were also found. The cause of death was related to traumatic shock due to blunt head trauma and multiple stab wounds. All autopsy data allowed drawing the following crime reconstruction: victim’s head was initially hit with the wooden board and the man fell down, striking his head on the floor. Then the offender uncovered the anterior thorax and abdominal anatomical regions of his father and stabbed him with the pair of scissors and the screwdriver. Finally, he raised the victim’s body, crushing the chest with his weight. The offender’s criminal profile revealed a 45-year-old man, with elementary school education. At a young age, he became a construction worker at building sites in Northern Italy. The father, a construction worker too, was described as extremely strict with the son. The mother, a housewife, was characterized as a warm-hearted woman. The offender was very shy, the second of six children, and the only son. He did not have any recent romantic interests and he remembered only one relationship with a woman in the past. No psychiatric disorders were in his medical records. He had a history of drug-addiction (intravenous heroin) and during the last years, he admitted to occasional use of cannabinoids and cocaine sniffing. However, the drug screen was negative when he was imprisoned. His mother had died a few months before, and due to an accident at work, the offender had lost his job. He was at home with his father every day. The mother’s death broke the intra-family balance, and co-habitation caused relationships to deteriorate. The domestic context and the special violence of the crime induced the Court to impose a forensic psychiatric assessment of the offender that excluded factors of mental illness or psychiatric disorders at the time he killed the father. On these bases, the presented case is an unusual patricide that departs from those typically found in the literature.

**Forensic Pathology, Patricide, Forensic Psychiatry**