



D18 Determination of Autoerotic Asphyxial Deaths

Gloria Barton, MFS, 33 Ludlow Lane, E, Palm Coast, FL 32137; and Tim Gallagher, MD, Volusia County OME, 1360 Indian Lake Road, Daytona Beach, FL 32124*

After attending this presentation, attendees will gain an appreciation of common misconceptions surrounding autoerotic asphyxial death scenes. Identified will be ten criteria and two exclusions that death scene investigators can utilize to promote increased proficiency in investigative actions in potential Autoerotic Asphyxiation (AeA) scenes. Five cases of this secretive and potentially deadly sexual practice in the Central Florida region are retrospectively evaluated from the records of a county medical examiner's office using the principles prescribed.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by emphasizing that the manner of death classification is important because deaths resulting in the practice of AeA are accidents as opposed to asphyxial deaths without AeA components, which are classified as suicides. Additional considerations inherent in AeA scenes can involve the disbursement of insurance claims and psychological issues of the autoerotic practitioner, making this a crucial forensic science matter. The significance in identifying these objectives will not only provide recognition of AeA, but will also assist in manner-of-death determination by assisting law enforcement and medicolegal experts in evaluating AeA cases. Additionally, it will provide insight into the psychological aspects of practicing individuals. Furthermore, the information will assist law enforcement and medicolegal experts in evaluating AeA cases.

The activity of AeA is often revealed at the medical examiner's office or the coroner's office due to a faulty safety mechanism in the asphyxial device leading to the practitioner's demise. AeA shares common elements with asphyxial suicides and is often interpreted as such. The intention of the participant in this act is not for a fatal outcome; on the contrary, it is to achieve heightened sexual gratification.

Unfortunately, there are unique circumstances in AeA death scenes that may mislead the investigator. These include loved ones tampering with the death scene for the purposes of minimizing perceptions of social disgrace and the non-recognition of assorted paraphilias associated with AeA that rule out suicide. It is important for the investigator to recognize an altered death scene.

This study elucidates ten novel characteristics involved in AeA that will differentiate it from an asphyxial suicide scene. It will also assist in manner-of-death determination, identify paraphilias associated with AeA at death scenes, and demonstrate that the act is often repetitive with an increasing level of complexity as the practitioner matures. It is recommended that medicolegal death investigators become familiar with these AeA criteria.

Autoerotic, Asphyxiation, Hypoxyphilia