



## Pathology/Biology Section - 2014

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### G107 The “Overkill” Gang Homicides

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The goal of this presentation is to present multiple murders carried out by a youth gang in the most violent manner with much cruelty. A detailed crime scene investigation and a complete postmortem examination established the different contemporary weapons used for the killings.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by emphasizing the problem of serial murders committed by emerging young gangs which, although widely present and frequent in the U.S. and Latin American countries, are not frequent or that common in Italy.

Gang homicides involving the use of different injurious means at the same time are rarely reported in the literature. Often, these gang-related murders occur with firearms and in public places, suggesting that gang homicides are quick, retaliatory reactions to ongoing gang-related conflicts. In fact, the homicides committed in southern Italy are principally attributable to groups of crimes organized locally, which control several illicit activities and are related to continual ongoing fights among the members of the local gangs. These crimes are typically committed to enact revenge, challenge reasons related to robbery, theft, settling, drug and mental disorders.

This study introduces four cases of homicides, committed in a northern town of Puglia, between June and October of 2012, by a band of boys between the ages of 17 and 31 years and comprised of six men and one woman.

The first two murders, committed at the same time, were related to drugs. The two victims were found just outside the city. One was in his car and had two gunshot wounds in the skull. The other was found in a field not far from the site of the murder with burned clothes and skin. Three gunshot wounds were detected in his head and thorax. The autopsy showed that he was killed by blows from a firearm and was later burned.

The third murder, committed for futile reasons, involved a 21-year-old male who disappeared in July 2012. His remains were found in December 2012 in a farmland’s field. Skeletal remains as well as fragments of muscular tissue, still wearing clothes, were completely buried under the mud in a prone position with the legs inside a plastic bag. In the field near the dead body, a bracelet, a piercing, and four bullets were found. Forensic activities involved external examination and radiological investigation by means of total body multislice Computed Tomography (CT) scan. Examination of the clothes helped to determine the different tools used to kill him, which were a firearm, blunt force, and a steel weapon, variously combined. The bones of the skull showed two gunshot wounds and many scratches from a blunt instrument. Several vertebral fractures and stab wounds on a rib and on a shoulder blade were recorded. Five anterior and six posterior tears on the right sleeve were described on the t-shirt; three tears were also found on the left leg of the shorts.

The last murder involves a 60-year-old man, killed for money reasons. The man was found dead in his own garage, lying prone on the floor. The floor was covered in blood close to the head. His wrists and ankles were bound by tape, and his neck and arms were tied together at the chest. At external examination, some incised wounds with regular margins were described on the neck and multiple linear lacerations with irregular and bruised margins were noted on the head. At gross examination, galea capitis showed massive hemorrhagic infiltration. Multiple linear fractures of the skull vault were detected. The neck revealed massive hemorrhages in the subcutaneous tissues and muscles and the right jugular vein was sectioned.

As established by other international publications, the use of drugs and violence are behind these gang-related murderers. The different tools and weapons which were used (firearms, blunt force, and “cutting” weapons) and the high numbers of injuries seen on the victims’ bodies are a clear and unquestionable sign of the cruelty of these crimes.

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### Gang Homicides, Extreme Violence (Overkill), Different Weapons