



E71 Italian Emergency Medical Team (EMT) Experience Regarding Crime Scene Access: A Proposal for a Specific Training Program

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The goal of this presentation is to inform attendees of the Italian EMT experience regarding crime scene access.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by comparing the traditional application of crime scene access techniques within the Italian EMT model and could be useful to other EMTs worldwide due to the differences of preparation, experience, and skill of EMTs in other countries.

In Italy, the EMT is different from region to region and every region has its own protocol for approaching patients and emergency situations. Every region delegates non-profit associations to provide emergency service by ambulances. None of these protocols include any particular procedure to enter and operate within a crime scene. In Italy, many of EMTs are volunteers.

Starting from these significant differences among training, experience, and protocols, this study focuses on a specific training program to preserve the crime scene during and after the EMT access. The study was initiated due to statistical data provided by Milan Operation Centre "118" (the Italian emergency number to call for an ambulance) as well as from field operations and newspapers. The conclusion was that none of the protocols followed by the EMTs considered the adoption of a precise method to be applied at crime scenes.

The data highlighted a problem: 90% of crime scenes had been damaged and contaminated by the access of the EMT team. In Italy, the EMT team does not operate if the patient is dead. But in most cases, even if they are dealing with a dead patient on a crime scene, the crime scene is often damaged by EMT access.

The second phase of the study focused on the analysis of EMT crews. The research revealed a heterogeneous collection of protocols, resources, workers, experiences, approaches, abilities, and skills.

In the third phase, a unique method was created to improve or to create the abilities of the EMT crew to enter a crime scene without touching, moving, removing, or destroying forensic evidence. The method consists of two simulated crime scenes for EMT trainees and an introductory explanation of forensic science. At first, the crime scene is presented at the very beginning. Team trainees are invited to enter the crime scene as first responders and to work as they normally would. After the first simulation, a deeper explanation about the forensic aspect and evidence collection is provided.

The trainees teams are then invited to re-enter the same crime scene. In the second entrance, in 95% of the cases, trainees paid attention to possible forensic evidence while they worked, maintaining protocol and preserving evidence.

This method is based on information flow. If EMTs are allowed to recognize and understand forensic work, they can operate taking care not to move objects on the scene or remove/contaminate evidence from the scene while making appropriate photo-video documentation.

Actual criminal cases will be illustrated to show the benefits of the proposed training.

EMT, Crime Scene, Training