



E41 The Risk of Selfie-Related Deaths: A Case Report on the Dangerous “Daredevil Selfie” Phenomenon

*Isabella Aquila, MD**, Institute of Legal Medicine, University Magna Graecia of Catanzaro, S Venuta-Medicina Legale, viale Europa, Catanzaro 88100, ITALY; *Matteo Antonio Sacco, MD*, Chair of Legal Medicine, University of Catanzaro, Viale Europa, Loc Germaneto, Catanzaro 88100, ITALY; *Valerio Riccardo Aquila*, Via Dante Alighieri, Crotone, ITALY; *Roberto Raffaele**, Via Thailandia N 1, Crotone, ITALY; *Santo Gratteri, MD**, Viale Europa, Germaneto, Catanzaro 88100, ITALY; *Paola Frati, PhD*, Dept of Anat Histol Forensic and Orthop Sciences, University of Roma, La Sapienza, Viale Regina Elena 336, Roma 00161, ITALY; *Vittorio Fineschi, MD, PhD*, University of Foggia, Forensic Pathology Dept, Ospedale Colonnello D’Avanzo, Foggia I-71100, ITALY; and *Pietrantonio Ricci, Viale Europa-Località Germaneto, Catanzaro, ITALY*

After attending this presentation, attendees will understand the term “daredevil selfie” and the phenomenon of selfie-related deaths.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by describing this phenomenon as it is publicized on the internet and represents an emulative, dangerous trend.

“Daredevil selfie” represents a trend of recent development. It deals with taking a selfie in places at high elevation (i.e., skyscrapers, roofs) or in dangerous places such as railway tracks during the passage of the train. The phenomenon gained fame on social networks and was copied by others. Contrary to its broadcasting by mass media, it is a phenomenon insufficiently described in literature. From 2014 to the first half of 2016, 75 persons died of selfie-related accidents. The medium age of victims was approximately 23 years and the 82% were male. Forensic cases of selfie-related death have not been reported in literature until recently. The last case that occurred in Italy will be discussed.

This is the case of a boy found dead on the railway track after being run over. A judicial inspection was checked in a raised iron railway bridge. On the way from Taranto to Reggio Calabria, the mutilated body of a boy was found. Photographic surveys were conducted and due to the railway police and forensic investigators, the entrances and exits were recorded. A cellphone and a left shoe were found approximately two meters from the victim. The cellphone was given to detectives to conduct an investigation of its contents. The body presented a very extended laceration with the exposition of cerebral matter and skullcap fragments spread over the point of impact. Cerebral matter fragments were also found 15 meters from the point where the body was found, delimiting the “primary impact point” where the train collided with the body.

By reconstructing the accident, information emerged that the boy impacted the iron piers of the bridge on the railway track, was dragged forward up to the point where the body hit against another iron structure and stopped. Found during the autopsy were traumatic brain injuries with fractures of the skull cap on the right of the occipital bone; multiple ecchymosis from the left mammillary region to the right haunch; fracture of the right tibia and perone; and a cut wound on the back with soft tissue exposure. A psychological autopsy was conducted to better reconstruct the motivations linked to the event. The method involved thorough structured interviews and the collection of all available information concerning the deceased. After informed consent, face-to-face and structured interviews with family members of the victim were conducted. A survey was conducted on the victim’s phone to analyze messages, photos or videos, and conversations via WhatsApp and his Facebook® account. By comparing data, it emerged that the victim had his back to the train trying to take an extreme selfie by holding the phone in his hand; when the boy noticed the closeness

This case report represents the last registered account regarding the phenomenon of the daredevil selfie. Unfortunately, the practice of extreme selfies is now rampant and represents an imitative, dangerous phenomenon as it is publicized on the internet. It is important to watch minors, who represent the most affected age bracket, with the help of social, scholastic, and family assistance to inform them that this is a very dangerous phenomenon in terms of mortality.

Forensic Science, Daredevil Selfie, Death