



H88 Fatalities to Children Falling Into Abandoned Borewells: A 10-Year Study

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand the fatalities caused to children who accidentally fall into abandoned borewells.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by informing attendees of the danger to children of playing in the vicinity of abandoned borewells regarding manner of causation of death, probability of survival, and the correlation of borewell depth with survival, if any.

There is a growing scarcity of fresh water reservoirs used for drinking, irrigation, and day-to-day washing and other personal usage. India has a varied geography, from snow in the mountains in the north to deserts in the west. The east has large broad rivers like the Ganges and Brahmaputras, while the south faces heavy rainfall. All these regions face the scarcity of potable water. To overcome this difficulty, ground water accessed by constructing open wells and borewells. In drought areas, open wells don't satisfy the need of water for various irrigation and drinking purposes. For this, borewells are a good alternative. The diameter of such borewells should be no more than seven to eight inches. Sometimes these borewells are dug up to 1,000 feet deep. Most often, the borewells are successfully dug to obtain water; however, sometimes the borewell doesn't produce enough water. Such borewells are then abandoned without taking proper measures to seal them.

Such abandoned borewells pose a danger to the public. Due to the small diameter of these borewells, they are not a real threat to a normal adult, but small children are particularly at risk of accidentally falling into them. The children can become accidentally stuck and trapped in the tubing or the hole of the borewell and are unable to extricate themselves. If immediate rescue does not occur, chances of survival are diminished. Such a scenario may also happen in other regions of world where such borewells are also dug.

Recently, news of people, particularly children, dying due to a fall in a borewell has received attention from the authorities, the media, and the public at large.^{1,2} Such incidents are preventable and valuable lives could be saved.^{3,4} A total of 43 incidents of victims falling in borewells was noted during the period from 2006 to 2015. Most of these cases were of children less than 6 years old, with a male preponderance. Most of these victims were not able to survive in the hostile environment inside the borewell.

This presentation will describe the age and sex distribution of fatalities from falls into borewells. The reason for the victims being involved in falls into borewells will be described. The medicolegal death investigator should become more familiar with incidents of victims being trapped in borewells and the manners of death caused by these events.

Reference(s):

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3. Shukla, Jainendra, Jitendra Kumar Pal, Faimy Q. Ansari, Gora Chand Nandi, and Pavan Chakraborty. SMART-A Social Mobile Advanced Robot Test Bed for Humanoid Robot Researchers. *Contemporary Computing*. pp. 463-470. Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 2012.
4. <http://www.ndtv.com/article/india/mahi-dies-in-borewell-the-85-hour-long-ordeal-235410>. Accessed on 26/05/2016.

Human Fatality, Borewell, Children