



B71 Bondage Practices in an Asphyxiation Death: An Accidental Death

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Learning Overview: After attending this presentation, attendees will better understand the features of a suicidal hanging death that occurred during autoerotic practices.

Impact on the Forensic Science Community: This presentation will impact the forensic science community by emphasizing the role of medical-legal investigations in hanging death cases presenting with a mask and multiple ropes and knots, confirming the importance of a multidisciplinary approach for the resolution of cases of forensic interest.

Autoerotic death is an uncommon cause of death with higher prevalence in middle-aged Caucasian people, usually caused by accidental self-hanging. Limiting the flow of oxygen to the brain leads to the accumulation of carbon dioxide, which can induce feelings of euphoria, confusion, and vertigo, which contribute to intensifying orgasm. It is considered by the medical community to be an extremely risky and potentially deadly practice, even for experienced individuals.¹⁻⁴

The Case: After numerous reports from some neighbors complaining about nauseating smells coming from an apartment, the corpse of a 34-year-old man was found hanging inside the locked apartment and the body was in an advanced state of putrefaction. A green mask with multiple conical studs was covering his face, his hands were tied with a rope in front of his neck, another rope was encircling his neck and fixed to the lower end of a door, the door handle was covered with a rag; and his feet were touching the floor. After conducting various and relevant examinations at the place of discovery, the body was taken for forensic investigations. Before performing the autopsy, a Computed Tomography (CT) dual scan detection was performed.

Results: The CT scan showed the anterior displacement of the hyoid bone, and no evidence of traumatic fractures were documented by the CT imaging. The autopsy findings were: tongue protrusion between clenched teeth; after removing the rope around the neck, a furrow with vital signs and an hemorrhagic infiltrate of the soft tissues and muscles under it were found. The histological findings confirmed the presence of vital signs in the furrow; but not much else because of the advanced state of putrefaction of the body. The study of the knots' disposition defined the death as a self-ligation procedure of the ropes.

In conclusion, the radiological imaging according to the autopsy, histological and toxicological findings, combined with police information, ascribed the death to mechanical asphyxiation occurring during autoerotic maneuvers. According to the witnesses, the man was used to performing self and heteroerotic practices using ropes and masks. The case was solved as an accidental death.

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Bondage, Hanging, Forensic Pathology