



## H90 Selfie-Related Injuries and Deaths in Italy

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**Learning Overview:** After attending this presentation, attendees will be aware that the incidence of taking extreme selfies to be shared on social media is increasing, also leading to selfie-related trauma and death.

**Impact on the Forensic Science Community:** This presentation will impact the forensic science community by highlighting that the incidence of selfie-related injuries and deaths is not negligible worldwide and is a problem that also cannot be ignored in Italy.

According to the Oxford dictionary, a selfie is defined as “A photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a smartphone or webcam and shared via social media”. Clicking selfies and sharing them on social media has become a common means of self-expression. However, individuals sometimes portray themselves in dangerous settings so as to gain attention on social media sites. In some cases, this may have fatal consequences. A “Killfie” is actually a term used in the common language to define an extreme selfie which is potentially life-threatening for the photographer. Cases of selfie-related death or mortality are defined as accidental deaths precipitated by the process of self-photography; these may occur just before, during, or just after the process, which is typically documented via cell phone. This worldwide phenomenon also occurs in Italy, though incidence has not been well established, and scientific medical journal articles on the subject are lacking.

In order to better define the exact incidence of selfie-related injuries and deaths in Italy, a media-based search from 2014 to 2019 was performed; medium age, geographical locations, and manner of occurrence were analyzed and compared with other media-based searches in the literature from other countries.<sup>1,2</sup>

Study results suggest that information and awareness campaigns are necessary, especially among the youngest: in India, for instance, “no selfie zones” have been created, while in Russia, a campaign urging people to take safer selfies has been launched. It is probable that there is an underestimation of the real number of selfie-related injuries and deaths in the studies conducted worldwide; in fact, other studies, by considering only English language media articles, do not take into consideration the local press written in other languages. Researchers worldwide should therefore conduct similar studies in order to describe this phenomenon in a thorough manner in all nations, to obtain an actual count of selfie-related injuries and deaths.

With regard to selfie-related deaths, the forensic pathologist’s role entails shedding light on the dynamics of the events; although the cause of death is rarely in doubt, the manner of death is often unclear. Consequently, the inquiry needs to be thorough to establish if the death was indeed accidental rather than suicidal or homicidal in nature.

### Reference(s):

1. Lamba, Hemank, Bharadhwaj, Varun, Vachher, Mayank, Agarwal, Divyansh, Arora, Megha, and Kumaraguru, Ponnurangam. (2016). Me, Myself and My Killfie: Characterizing and Preventing Selfie Deaths. *arXiv preprint arXiv:1611.01911*.
2. Dokur M., Petekkaya E., Karadağ M. Media-based clinical research on selfie-related injuries and deaths. *Ulus Travma Acil Cerrahi Derg.* 2018 Mar;24(2):129-135.

### Selfie, Selfie-Related Death, Selfie-Related Injury