

Unnatural deaths in medicolegal autopsies.

Dr. Lokendar Pal Singh¹, Dr. P.C.Vyas²

¹Senior Demonstrator, ² Senior Professor

¹Department of Forensic Medicine, Government Medical College, Bharatpur

²Department of Forensic Medicine, S.N. Medical College, Jodhpur

Correspondence Author: Dr. P.C. Vyas, Senior Professor, Department of Forensic Medicine, S.N. Medical College, Jodhpur

Type of Publication: Original Research Paper

Conflicts of Interest: Nil

Abstract

Background- The term “unnatural death” has been defined U/s 174 Cr.P.C, as that a person has committed suicide or he has been killed by another or he has been killed by an animal or by a machinery or an accident or the person has died under circumstances raising a reasonable suspicion that some other person has committed an offence.

Methods- A retrospective study on cases of natural deaths brought for medicolegal autopsies to the mortuary was carried out. Circumstances surrounding the deaths were analyzed from the police report.

Results- 57% death was due to road traffic accident followed by 13% death due to disease in any body organs, 7% death due to poisoning and 3% death due to burning.

Conclusion- The road traffic accident main reason of unnatural death.

Keywords-Unnatural Deaths, Road traffic accidents, Poisoning.

Introduction

Death is said to be natural when it occurs due to natural disease or pathological condition, old age, disability or devitalisation, in which death is not intended or attempted and also does not occur accidentally but one that is

primarily attributed to an illness or an internal malfunction of the body not directly influenced by external forces.¹ Sudden natural deaths constitute a considerable portion of deaths, which undergo medicolegal autopsies. A suspicion of foul play is raised when a healthy person without any significant past history of illness is found dead. Further, the suspicion over the cause and manner of death grows if the terminal event occurs unnoticed or unobserved by anyone. In such cases, the exact cause of death may be established only after a post-mortem examination. Further, spreading awareness is necessary in clearing the mystery surrounding the abruptness of these deaths.

The term “unnatural death” has been defined U/s 174 Cr.P.C, as that a person has committed suicide or he has been killed by another or he has been killed by an animal or by a machinery or an accident or the person has died under circumstances raising a reasonable suspicion that some other person has committed an offence. Pattern of unnatural deaths is a reflection of the socio-economic status and mental health of the society. In India, in less than every five minutes one person dies due to Road Traffic accidents. Crime rate in the society are directly linked to the illiteracy and poverty of the community.¹⁻³

Material and Methods

A retrospective study on cases of natural deaths brought for medicolegal autopsies to the mortuary was carried out. Circumstances surrounding the deaths were analyzed from the police report. Information regarding life style was collected from family members. In this study, poisoning and trauma cases have been excluded. The cases were analysed with regard to annual incidence, age and sex incidence of the victims, external injuries present on the body, the cause of death and type of diseases causing the deaths. The detailed case history, police records, hospital records, if available, and postmortem examination reports were studied. The findings were statistically analysed using descriptive statistics to find out the mean, percentage and frequencies.

Results

Age and sex wise incidence showed 86 males and 14 females with a male: female ratio of 6.14:1. The highest number of cases was observed in the age group of 31-50 years (54%).

Table 1: Manner of Deaths

Mode of death	Frequency	Percentage
RTA	57	57
Burning	3	3
Poisoning	7	7
Hanging	4	4
Disease	13	13
Other	16	16
Total	100	100

57% death was due to road traffic accident followed by 13% death due to disease in any body organs, 7% death due to poisoning and 3% death due to burning.

Discussion

57% death was due to road traffic accident followed by 13% death due to disease in any body organs, 7% death

due to poisoning and 3% death due to burning in our study.

The ongoing revolution of evolving faster and better means of transport, the world over, has brought along with it an important and unwelcome guest - road traffic accidents. These have taken an almost epidemic form in the recent past. This is particularly true of our country where one person becomes victim of this man made dragon in less than every five minutes.

The increase in the number of road-traffic fatalities observed in our study is in similar to the reports from other parts of India that have registered a regular increase^{4,6}. The main reason for this is perhaps the not strict implementation of the traffic rules by the authorities, and the citizens unaware the traffic rules. Not maintained roads have also played an important role in increased the accident rate in the city.

Conclusion

The road traffic accident main reason of unnatural death.

References

1. Reddy KSN. The Essentials of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology. 30th Ed. Medical Book Company, Hyderabad. 2011. Page. 5.
2. Universal's Criminal Manual. Part I: The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. Universal Law Publishing Co. Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, India. 2015;page 129.
3. Kumar MTS, Kanchan T, Yoganarasimha K, Kumar PG. Profile of unnatural deaths in Manipal, Southern India 1994-2004. Journal of Clinical Forensic Medicine 2006;13:117-120.
4. Banerjee K.K. Study of Thoraco-abdominal injuries in fatal road traffic accidents in Northeast Delhi - JFMT 1997; XIV[1]40-43.
5. Aryappan A and Jayadev CJ. Society in India; Social Science Publication;1985.

6. Updated Kuppuswamy's socioeconomic scale for 2012. - Journal of Dr. NTR university of Health Sciences, year 2013, volume 2, issue 3, page 201-202.