



Death Due to Assault with Coconut Scraper; Application of Locard's Principle in Medico-legal Investigations

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Authors' contributions

All authors have contributed to preparation of the paper. Authors MV, DSK and DA conducted initial forensic investigations. Authors PRR and MV structured the text and conducted literature survey. All authors have approved final version of the paper.

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Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The Locard's principle is based on the fact that "every contact leaves a trace". This case highlights its application at the scene, autopsy, examination of assailant and weapon.

Case Report: A dead body of 33 years old woman was found inside the kitchen, lying in a pool of blood mainly around the head. A coconut scraper with blood stains was present nearby.

An autopsy revealed a split laceration situated on the occipital scalp with underlying depressed comminuted fracture accompanied by fresh bleeding. There were contusions and abrasions over both upper limbs. The cause of death was attributed to cranio-cerebral injuries due to blunt force

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impact. The examination of the alleged assailant showed patterned abrasion with serrations on the left and right palm.

Conclusion: Contusions of upper limb of the deceased were compatible with defensive injuries. The patterned injuries on the palms of the suspect suggest that he was holding a blade of the scraper with his left hand while supporting the shaft of the scraper with right hand. The blood on the wooden part of the scrapper indicates the contact point of the scraper with the head.

Keywords: Locard's principle; coconut scrapper; serrated injuries.