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Importance of Post - Mortem (Medicolegal Autopsy)

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Abstract

Autopsy means auto =self, opis=view, Greek autopsia means seeing with one's own eyes, literally means to see for one self. A medico-legal autopsy (Necropsy) Necros=dead, opis =view post=after, mortem -death. Post mortem is a special type of scientific examination of dead body carried out under the laws of the state mainly for the protection of its citizens and to assist the identification and prosecution of guilty in case of unnatural death. It requires state permission and must meet with certain essential requirement. Post mortem examination are done in mortuaries. It requires a specialized approach and technical knowledge and crime detection. Confirm identity by the police officer or constable or the relatives. Always take signature of the person identifying. Never performs an autopsy examination without an authorization order. The main aim of post mortem should be identity, the cause and minor of death and identity the deceased if un known. To collect evidence from the body that can be used to prove or disprove and individual guilt or innocence and to confirm or deny the account of how the death occurred. To provide Expert testimony if the case goes to trial. In charge of infanticide, to decide whether the infant was born alive.

Key words: Post mortem, Medico legal, Autopsy, Necropsy.

Aim and Objectives

- 1) To create awareness about Medico legal Autopsy
- 2) Detail study about Medico legal Autopsy.
- 3) Rules and regulation about Medico legal Autopsy.
- 4) Study related act for conducting Medico legal Autopsy.
- 5) Precautions before conducting Medico Legal Autopsy.

Introduction:

Post mortem examination or autopsy in a medico legal case is an important duty and responsibility of a Medical officer. Without a detailed post mortem examination, no investigation of death could be considered complete and satisfactory. Post mortem examinations are done in mortuaries where the dead bodies are stocked, post mortem examinations are performed and the dead bodies are made over to the relatives for performing last rites. The dead bodies are required to be treated with dignity and minimum requirement of a morgue. Any indignity offered to human corpse is punishable u/s 297 IPC. Such as decomposed and unidentified dead bodies should be disposed of within 72 hours of their arrival in morgue. Post mortem examination of Medico legal cases requires a specialized approach and technical knowledge of law and crime detection.

History:-

As per historical background it is very difficult to mention when the first medical autopsy was held in this World, but from the record it is seen that antistius the physician examined the body of Julius Caser. (100-4B.C.) and opined that out of twenty three injuries, only one injury in chest was fatal. First performed Medico legal Autopsy Mr. Bartoloniao Devarignana of Bologana -Italy in 1302.

Autopsy is said to performed in the year 1559 when king Henry 2nd suffered a fatal injury and died eleven days later Dr.Ambroise pare, a celebrated French Surgeon, dissected the body and discovered a subdural hematoma.

In INDIA Dr. Buckeley at Chennai in 1693.

Dr. Hamilton performed Autopsy at Kolkata in 1725.

Rules ,Principle And Procedure :

1. All registered medical practitioner can also perform this with an authorization by the state.
2. Consent –for medical autopsy no consent is required by legal permission or authorization (requisition from police is a must)
3. Legal information –Legal formalities in taking up a case for medico-legal autopsy are authorization ,identification of the deceased ,facts about case ,place of performing autopsy .
4. Never perform an autopsy examination without an authorization order.
5. A dead body is better identified prior to autopsy.If the deceased is a known person it is mandatory to get it identified.
6. If the deceased is unknown efforts are made in noticing the factors which could help in establishing the identifying letter.

In those cases with no criminological background is suspicion, the dead body is the property of the heir of the deceased. No post mortem can be undertaken in those cases without the consent of heirs. Failure to procure this consent may create a serious complication for medical officer and some time may lead to litigation and a compensation suit.

For better autopsy result always try to study all available facts about the case prior to autopsy and includes inquest report issue by police, hospital records (If any such as wound certificate, case file/ sheet.

Avoid the unnecessary delay in performing autopsy .Do not allow unauthorized person into the mortuary, if allowed record a statement from him or her giving reasons for his or her presence and signature for being present during the autopsy.

An autopsy is better done in day light .It should not be done in sufficient artificial light in order to prevent missing of finding such as anemia ,Jaundice, color change in P.M. lividity. How ever, in exigency situations for law and order problems medico-legal autopsy may be conducted even after dusk or in the night with an order from DC. Understanding artificial light having daylight effect.

Video recording should be done of the whole procedure. Body, instrument, table should be keep clean orderly in time.

Prepare the P.M. notes during autopsy .P.M. report should prepare immediately or within twenty four hours. Report should be in triplicates one for investigating officer, second copy for office file and third one for the doctor who does the autopsy and sign duly. However this report only to an authorized police officer /constable routed through proper channel.

Types of autopsy

- 1.Medico-legal autopsy
- 2.Hospital autopsy- Done for academic and research purpose ,no legal issue involve also called clinical or pathological autopsy ,permission of relatives required.
- 3.Psychological autopsy
- 4.Endoscopic autopsy
- 5.Virtual autopsy .

Examination at time of autopsy

- 1.External examination –from head to toe.
- 2.Internal examination

Skull, thorax, abdomen should be opened and examined as a routine; no autopsy is complete until all part of the body have been examined and dissected in details.

Skin incisions are of three types

1. I –Shaped
2. Y-Shaped
3. Y-Modified shape.

Conclusion : After studying all aspect we came to conclusion that

- 1.Post mortem is very important in all suspicious death for carrying out cause of death .
- 2.All precaution should be taken at every step from receiving corpus and all external internal examination.
3. In medico-legal autopsy no need to take permission or consent from relatives.
- 4.Preserve viscera in proper manner and sealed and labeled should be send to forensic laboratory.

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