

There is no Small Enemy: A Peripheral Single Penetrating wound by Scissors with Death Results

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Abstract

A case of a 78-year-old female is reported, who died from bleeding caused by a small incised-cutting wound, located on the right leg and affecting the fibular artery. Some 6 to 7 hours passed after the wound was caused and, all through this time she did several things, among them asking for help. Some first aid knowledge would probably avoid such deaths.

Keywords: Nail scissors stabbing, bleeding, accident

Introduction

The ability to develop physical activity after having suffered a sharp pointed weapon fatal wound can be very variable, and it is in direct relation with the localization of the wound. According to reported cases, the survival time varies from about 10 seconds following a wound in the right ventricle, up to 5 hours something following an incision in the great saphenous¹.

On the other hand, the knowledge of the risks derived from the use of home tools is among the strategies to be developed in order to prevent accidents, specially those involving children².

The following case report may alert about the potential hurt that an apparently not important lesion can hide. And also make easier investigating other cases of a similar nature³.

Case report

After receiving a telephone alert from a relative, the police went into the private residence of an advanced in years woman. At the main corridor were found blood remains, forming different size puddles as well as trickles and splashes. The proprietress dead body was found in the dinning-room, sitting in a natural way on an armchair (Fig. 1). Under the sole of the right foot, there was a blood puddle, some blood stained towels around and a bucket containing blood coloured water. On the corridor at the left hand side of the image, a sequence of blood small puddles and trickles made it possible seeing the trajectory followed by the deceased on her final walk.

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Fig 1: Woman's dead body as found in the dining-room



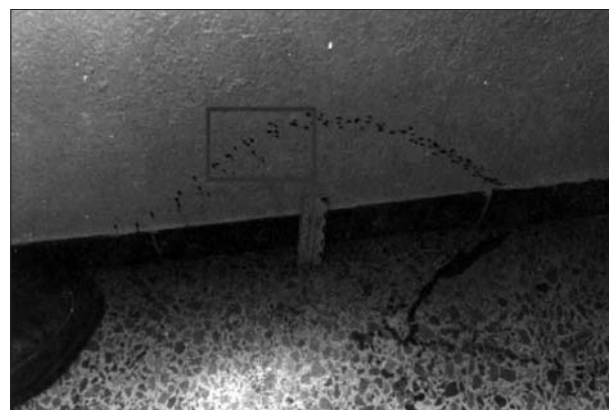
Fig 2: Traces of blood at the event scene.



Fig 3: Nail scissors found.



Fig 4: Traces of blood at the event scene.



An inspection of the house showed that the blood traces started in the bedroom, at the foot of a chair (Fig. 2). At the same room were found a pair of nail scissors, whose cutting blades were 2 cm long and 4 mm (Fig. 3) at its maximum width. The traces give clear proof of a walk from the bedroom towards the bathroom and from there, through the main corridor (Fig. 4,5), to the dining-room.

Once the autopsy was carried on, the sole finding at the external examination was a 2 mm long sharp lesion (Fig. 6), situated at the outer side of the right leg, 6.5 cm above the lateral malleolus of the fibula that incised the fibular artery where the fatal hemorrhage was originated. The autopsy does not show any other relevant fact, except an extreme paleness of all the entrails.

Once studied the pieces of information at the legal proceedings, the facts can be reconstructed as follows: the morning of the events, about eleven o'clock, the charwoman helps the proprietress to

Fig 5: Traces of blood at the event scene.**Fig 6: Wound origin of the bleeding.**

take a bath and then leaves her sitting on the bedroom armchair, ready to do one's nails. As the charwoman will not come back till next day, she has left some food ready to serve. While the woman doing her nails, she hurts herself in the leg; the inspectors cannot determine the way it exactly happened. From this moment she walks twice: firstly to the kitchen and then to the bathroom, where she takes a pack of swap and a bottled antiseptic. Then she makes her last walk to the dinning-room. Once there, she tries unsuccessfully to stop the bleeding by using some towels and the swap. At about 17,30, from a telephone at her reach, she calls her sister and asks her for help, as something very serious has happened. The sister, who resides in a different town, calls the police, which arrive to the house at 18'45. The police state that the body is still warm.

Discusión

Prior to be published the general characteristics of wounds caused with scissors⁴, the use of this kind of tools, as a murder weapon was already documented⁵. Its use as a self killing tool has been also published, although very separately in time^{6,7}. The presence of scissors in several non-fatal cases of violence has been also studied from different points of view^{8,9,10}.

On the other hand, there is no notice of any publication where scissors appear as the cause of accidental death.

The publication of this case, describing an active survival over six hours, may help to know the danger on some apparently low-risky tools. And, of course, to reiterate the need of spreading first aid basic concepts among the citizens.

We declare that we have no conflict of interest.

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