

Medico-Legal aspects of Unnatural Death with reference to Forensic Science

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ABSTRACT: *Forensic Science plays a significant role in the modern era. Forensic Science assists in the thorough investigation of any criminal, conspicuous matter; the investigation can be of a small matter to that of a heinous crime such as murder. This particular paper will be solely looking at the medico-legal aspects and perspectives of forensic science in the aspects of Unnatural deaths. In the case of unnatural deaths, there are a great number of challenges faced by the investigators along with forensic scientists while doing meticulous medico-legal investigations and critical analysis to ascertain their cause, manner, and surrounding circumstances. This research paper examines the complicated characteristics and details of unnatural death investigations through the glasses of forensic science. The paper shows the uniqueness and magic of the roles of forensic pathology, toxicology, pattern recognition as well as interdisciplinary collaboration in the clarification and reduction of the complexities of the unnatural death cases. This particular paper explores the legal obligations and procedures of a protocol which are important in such investigations. This research underscores the importance of panoramic forensic examination along with analysis of evidence which is required in medico-legal enquires during investigation. For the perfect synthetization of the research paper, various references from literature reviews and case studies have been utilized. The study provides comprehensive and elaborated knowledge by giving an analysis of relevant insights into the medico-legal intricacies of unnatural death and providing practical and helpful recommendations for the beneficial enhancement of investigative practices in India in this zone.*

Keywords: *Unnatural death, Medico-legal investigation, Forensic science, Evidence Analysis*

INTRODUCTION

The inescapable and unavoidable conclusion of human life is death. According, to science death is the final and irreversible cessation of the physiological functions of the body's three most vital organs- the brain, heart and lungs. According to

Black's Law Dictionary, death means the cessation of life; the ceasing of exist.¹The medical findings that account for the man's death are the cause and manner of death, it can be natural, accidental, homicide, suicidal or undeterminable. Unnatural death can be defined as a death that is caused by outside factors such as poisoning or injury which includes unintentional injury caused in an accidental manner; and intentional injuries such as homicide or suicide. The death of one person due to the actions of another is called as homicide. Whereas, any death which results from an accident is classified as an accidental death. Suicidal death is the act of intentionally and freely ending one's own life. When the cause of death cannot be determined through autopsy and toxicological examination, some unnatural death remains unsolved.

Medical science plays a crucial role in the criminal justice system. A medico- legal autopsy is a scientific examination of a deceased person's body conducted to ascertain the reason of death, time of death, identification of the deceased and circumstances of death. This examination is conducted in the majority of nations in order to put blame on the wrongdoer or offender and assist in determining the proper punishment in order to uphold justice and satisfy the public, relatives and other stakeholders. This is essential for preventing crime and promoting justice and peace in society. Forensic pathology is the branch of science that deals with postmortem procedures and emphasizes on autopsy and investigations to ascertain the cause of death. Forensic Thanatology, where "thanatos" means death and "logos" means science. This branch of science deals with death in all its aspects. Different countries may have different medico- legal death investigation systems, and variations may even exist within a single nation. In India, the medico- legal death investigation is carried either by the police or the magistrate.

¹ Black's Law Dictionary 513 (10th ed. 2015).

Forensic science is necessary in investigating unnatural deaths. It involves using scientific methods; techniques to collect, examine and evaluate data pertaining to the cause and manner of death. It is crucial to properly record all forensic investigations and conclusions. All the findings are summarized in forensic reports, which are essential records for administrative and legal reasons. In court proceedings, forensic specialists could be asked to testify as experts to explain their findings and conclusions about the cause and manner of death. Their knowledge can serve a purpose in helping The judges to understand complex scientific data. In medico- legal investigations, maintaining a safe chain of custody is essential to guarantee that evidence is properly handled, recorded and stored. This preserves the integrity of evidence in court. Ethical criteria must be followed in forensic examination of unnatural deaths in order to assure the dignity of the deceased and the accuracy of findings. It is also crucial to be sensitive to religious and cultural views.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the main forensic science viewpoints and medico-legal elements in the study of unexplained deaths, and how do they support the criminal justice system?
2. What significance does the idea of "unnatural death" have for forensic scientific procedures, and how does it relate to medico-legal frameworks?
3. What are the main obstacles and points of contention surrounding the medico-legal examination of unexplained deaths, encompassing moral quandaries and the influence of developing forensic technologies?
4. What critical role does forensic evidence play in determining the method, cause, and circumstances of unexplained deaths, especially when it comes to criminal investigations and court cases?
5. What are the legal obligations of medical examiners, forensic pathologists, law enforcement officials, and other stakeholders in the investigation of unnatural deaths, focusing on evidence collection, chain of custody, and courtroom testimony?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To examine statistical data on unnatural deaths, including causes, demographics, and

geographic distribution, to identify patterns and trends that may inform forensic investigations and legal proceedings.

2. To clarify the concept of "unnatural death" within the context of medico-legal frameworks, emphasizing its relevance to forensic science practices.
3. To identify challenges and controversies associated with the medico-legal investigation of unnatural deaths, including issues related to interpretation of evidence, ethical dilemmas, and the impact of evolving forensic technologies.
4. Assess the significance of forensic evidence in establishing the cause, manner, and circumstances of unnatural deaths, with a particular emphasis on its role in criminal investigations and legal proceedings.
5. Analyse the legal obligations of medical examiners, forensic pathologists, law enforcement officials, and other stakeholders involved in the investigation of unnatural deaths, focusing on issues such as evidence collection, chain of custody, and courtroom testimony.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research takes a doctrinal approach that is largely theoretical, logical, and descriptive. To gain a thorough understanding of the topic and to make the work more productive, the researcher used a variety of reference sources, including research papers, legislation, books, law periodicals, publications, and judicial judgments. The researcher examines the notions previously established by law and, when possible, proposes superior alternatives. So, to conduct effective research on this subject, it is best to prefer doctrinal research and to review various relevant laws in place. The researcher also believes that the research methodology is not restricted to analytical and prescriptive instruments, but also includes secondary and tertiary empirical evidence that helps to further critically examine the research subject. As a result, the researcher believes that the methodologies used in the current study are appropriate for the topic being discussed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. "Malpractice—unnatural death. Medico-legal problems in the diagnostic activity of pathologists"

by W Janssen²: This article delves into the complicated intersection of forensic science and medical practices with legal repercussions. The author of this particular article initiated the article by demonstrating the key definitions that surround the medical field, especially regarding malpractice in the medical field and unnatural death, thereafter highlighting the significance of medical interventions within the framework of death due to crime, even when the proven guilt is lacking.

The main theme or argument of this particular article is the contents present in the Cemetery and Burial Act which talks about the transformation of medical and scientific research into the tools of legal actions. Janssen interrogates the productiveness and the legitimacy of such practices and he suggests that the act undermines the significant objectives of medical and scientific injury.

Moreover, this particular article upholds the implementation of a system that is associated with those in various European Nations in which all the medical practitioners are ordered or given a mandate regarding reports of any unnatural deaths. This exhortation aims to streamline the investigation along with the identification of death which tends to be suspicious, facilitating a healthy medico-legal process.

Quintessentially, this particular work by Janssen underscores the complexities that are inherent in the diagnostic pursuits of pathologists and emphasizes the requirement for a harmonious balance between medical practices, forensic scrutiny along legal considerations so that there is steady justice in the ascertainment of the cause of death.

2. “Forensic Pathology: Principles and Practice³”: This is a scientific handbook related to Forensic Pathology written by Vincent J.M. DiMaio, (M.D.) along with Suzanna E. Dana, (M.D.). This particular scientific handbook provides a comprehensive guide for the meticulous process of the investigation of unnatural deaths which elucidates the significant roles forensic pathologists play in the determination of the cause and manner of death. This book provides a thorough examination of methodologies for the collection of evidence and, a critical analysis of the evidence accumulated concerning legal

context, as a result, this handbook provides an intricate functioning of forensic science. The authors made this particular scientific handbook resourceful and indispensable for forensic scientists, professionals, and advocates.

3. “The Essentials of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology⁴”: This particular textbook is authored by K.S. Narayan Reddy and showcases an in-depth analysis and expedition about the investigation of unnatural deaths. The book provides intricate knowledge and information regarding autopsy methodologies to the delicate interpretation of autopsy outcomes. The particular book provides the readers with the required skills related to medico-legal inquiries. The book caves into the functions of toxicological analysis in finding crucial evidence regarding toxins and their influence on the impact on the human body. It works as a comprehensive guide and focuses on the practical applications along with theoretical bedrock and serves as an essential resource for forensic scientists, doctors, advocates, and medical students who seek to understand the concepts of toxicology along with forensic medicine in the aspect of investigating deaths which tends to be suspicious and unnatural.

4. “Forensic Medicine: Clinical and Pathological Aspects⁵”: This particular book is a non-fictional book written by the renowned author Burkhard Madea which provides an in-depth analysis of forensic science concerning forensic medicines. The book provides an emphasis on the clinical as well as the pathological elements of diverse modes of unnatural deaths. The book hunts into the various legal remedies and implications of the findings of forensic science and the significance of scrupulous information and documentation of medico-legal cases.

5. “Essentials of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology⁶: For Undergraduates”. This renowned book was written by the famous forensic writer Anil Agrawal. This particular book is a blessing in disguise for law students, especially those students who are studying undergraduate courses regarding forensic science subjects such as medicine and toxicology. The book covers essential and significant topics related to the investigation of

² W.Janssen, Medico-legal problems in the diagnostic activity of pathologists, 1978 Apr 28;720(17):587-90

³ DiMaio, V. J. M., & Dana, S. E. (2015). Forensic Pathology: Principles and Practice. CRC Press

⁴ K.S. Narayan Reddy (2017) “Essentials of Forensic Science and Toxicology

⁵ Burkhard Madea (2002) “Forensic Medicine: Clinical and Pathological Aspects”

⁶ Anil Agrawal (2017) “Essentials of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology: For Undergraduates”

unnatural deaths such as murder or abetment to suicide, etc. along with topics such as forensic autopsy and its findings and procedures and the functions of forensic scientists or experts in legal challenges.

ANALYSIS

UNNATURAL DEATH

"Unnatural Death"⁷ is the term used to describe a death that happens unexpectedly or under suspicious circumstances, usually not from natural causes. To ascertain the cause and circumstances surrounding the death, criminal investigations or inquiries are frequently necessary. This phrase includes a range of situations, including murders, mishaps, suicides, and deaths brought on by carelessness or malevolence. Questions concerning possible criminal involvement, medical error, or other circumstances that diverge from the typical sequence of events leading to death are raised by unnatural deaths. To uncover the truth behind the death, forensic analysis and careful evaluation of the facts are necessary while conducting an investigation into an unexplained death.

What are the types of unnatural deaths?

(A) Hanging

The definition of hanging is death brought about by the body being suspended by a neck ligature. The weight of the body, or occasionally just a portion of it, such as the head, is the restricting force in this case that causes hypoxia.

Two kinds of hanging exist

Typical Hanging: This type of hanging occurs when the feet are not in contact with the ground and the body is suspended from a high point of suspension. The entire body's weight acts as a constriction in this situation.

Partial Hanging: This is referred to as "atypical" or "partial hanging" when a body part, such as the knees, feet, etc., touches the ground.

Hanging symptoms include loss of strength and feeling, such as bright flashes and sounds in the ears, which are followed by unconsciousness. One may witness convulsions during judicial hanging. Considering how quickly unconsciousness sets in, hanging could be regarded as a painless way to pass away. It might not be feasible to save oneself in an accidental or suicidal hanging due to the quick onset

of unconsciousness. After breathing stops, the heart beats for ten to fifteen minutes.

(B) Choking

Strangulation is a brutal method of dying in which the neck is constricted with a rope or another tool without the corpse being suspended:

- **Throttling:** This is the result of fingers or palms causing a constriction in the neck.
- **Mugging:** This is the act of squeezing someone's neck with a foot, knee, or bent elbow.
- **Bans-dola:** This traditional North Indian practice involves placing one sturdy bamboo in front of the neck and one on the rear. Rope is used to bind these. It is the squeezing that causes the constriction. Bamboos can sometimes be squeezed by applying foot pressure.

(C) Asphyxia

When air is forced out of the lungs through a method other than neck compression, suffocation occurs. The reasons of suffocation are as follows:

- **Smothering:** This is characterized by the mouth and nose being closed. Due to their lack of resistance, children are often killed in this manner. Applying pressure to the lips and nose with a little cushion is an option. Because they have far less physical strength than men with able bodies, even elderly people and ladies are slaughtered. Little children may unintentionally suffocate if their moms cover them or if they are tightly squeezed on their breasts during eating.

(D) Drowning

It is described as a type of death that happens when the body is submerged in water or another fluid, preventing atmospheric air from reaching the lungs. A total submersion is not necessary for someone to die from drowning. Death is possible even if only the face is submerged.

The following are the several categories of drowning:

- **Submerged in water:** It might be in saltwater or freshwater. In each case, the post-mortem results are distinct.
- **Submerged in a dry state:** Water can occasionally cause laryngeal spasms when it enters the airways, which closes off the airway entirely to the lungs.

⁷ Indian penal code, 1860, § 377 No. 45, Acts of Parliament, 1860 (India)

This keeps water from getting to the lungs. There are none of the telltale signs of drowning.

Medico legal aspects of unnatural death with respect to forensic science

(A) Police Inquest

The officer-in-charge, who is often the sub-inspector of a police station, conducts the inquest in accordance with section 174⁸ of the Cr. P.C. Investigation Officer (I.O.) is the title of the police officer conducting the inquest. When a police station officer learns of a fatal death—such as a suicide, murder, animal attack, accident, or death under circumstances giving rise to a reasonable suspicion—he notifies the closest Executive Magistrate who has the authority to hold an inquest as soon as possible. Under section 175 of the Cr.P.C. the investigating officer visits the crime scene or the hospital and, if two or more witnesses are present, compiles a report detailing the apparent cause of death.

(B) Magistrate's Inquest

District magistrates, sub-divisional magistrates, tahsildars, or any other Executive magistrate (S. 20 to 23 Cr. PC) with particular authority from the State Government (Executive Magistrates) perform this. This is carried out in situations where someone dies while in police custody, under questioning by police, in prison, reformatories, a mental health facility, during a divorce, or through exhumation. When a person passes away, vanishes, or is accused of raping a woman, it can be while they are in the care of the police or another type of custody approved by the court (S.174 (4), S.176 and 176, 1A, Cr.P.C.)⁹. A magistrate may hold an inquest in addition to or instead of a police inquest in any instance of death.

(C) Indian Evidence Act Concerning Documentary Proof

Document contents may be proved using primary or secondary evidence in accordance with Sections 61 and 62¹⁰. Primary evidence is the document that was produced for the Court's scrutiny. Except in the situations specified in Section 65¹¹ thereof, the document must be proved under Section 64 by

primary evidence, which is to say by producing the document itself. The post-mortem report copy was inadmissible on this account as well because it did not fall under any of the provisions of Section 65.

Techniques and technology used for analyzing unnatural death

The definition of death as mentioned in the Handbook of Forensic Medicine is the non-function of the body's major organ systems which primarily includes the cardiovascular system, Respiratory system, and the Nervous system. The death of a person is not always related to natural causes such as heart attack, multi-organ failure, etc but can be related to unnatural causes such as murder, abetment to suicide, and other criminal conspiracies. To check various aspects of unnatural death, various methods and technologies play a pivotal role. The technologies include fingerprint identification along with DNA extraction from the deceased person or the victim. Some of the key aspects of analysing unnatural deaths are as follows:

1. Autopsy: This is one of the most important methods that assist forensic doctors in understanding if the death of a person is natural or unnatural. In this method, a thorough investigation of a body is made both internally and externally and a close analysis is made by forensic doctors. In the case of internal investigation, the body is dissected for examination. In the case of murder due to poisoning, autopsy plays a benevolent role. Doctors can find out the poisons and other toxins which have been used to kill the deceased person. The case law *Sharad Birdhi Chand Sarda v. State of Maharashtra* (1984) emphasizes the role of forensic science in the case of murder by poison along with the required circumstances to prove the murder.

2. Toxicology: Toxicology plays an efficient role in the case of forensic science. Through the process of toxicology doctors and forensic experts can examine the tissues and fluids present in the body for the detection of various toxins, poisons, and drugs. There are various sub-methods used in toxicology that provide a qualitative analysis of the examination of bodily fluids such as "gas chromatography", mass spectrometry, and liquid chromatography.

⁸ THE CODE OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE, 1973 § 174, No. 2, Acts of Parliament, 1974(India).

⁹ THE CODE OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE, 1973 § 174(4), 176,176(1) A, No. 2, Acts of Parliament, 1974(India).

¹⁰ THE INDIAN EVIDENCE ACT, 1872 § 61, 62 ACT NO. 1 OF 1872

¹¹ THE INDIAN EVIDENCE ACT, 1872 § 65 ACT NO. 1 OF 1872

3. Histopathology: This is a significant process for the detection of injuries through microscopic means by studying the body tissues. Through this mechanism, the investigators get to know the cause of death.

4. Forensic Anthropology: This is a very unique mode of finding the death of a deceased person. This process comes into existence when there is no means to identify the body of any person due to the presence of only skeletal remains. This particular process helps to determine the characteristics and features (such as age, sex, etc) of the unidentifiable deceased person. Due to modernized technologies and data received through forensic anthropology, we can reconstruct the probable circumstances where the victim was killed.

5. Analysis of DNA: Nowadays analysis of DNA is a very common process. Through the process of DNA analysis, it has been easy for a particular person to decode their relationship with another person. DNA analysis plays quite a significant role in modern times, in finding out criminals or suspects who had been present at the scene of crime. There are two methodologies used by forensic scientists which are PCR and STR. In the case of "Kunhiraman v. Manoj"¹², the Supreme Court considered the reports by the DNA experts admissible in the court of law.

6. Ballistics Analysis: Ballistics analysis plays an efficient role whenever any injury or death is related to gunshot wounds. Through this analysis, forensic experts can the particular gun or ammunition that was used to target the victimized person.

7. Fingerprint Analysis: According to me the modern-day genius approach to finding a criminal is through the person's fingerprinting and photographic evidence which is present in the crime scene. Every person has a unique fingerprint that is different from another and creates a unique identity for different people. In the case of Prakash v. State of Karnataka¹³, the court upheld the importance of fingerprint evidence.

Medical aspects

Examination of unnatural death by an expert.

Autopsy, which literally translates as "self-study of a dead body," is performed for both legal and clinical reasons. When ante-mortem attempts fail, a clinical autopsy, also known as a pathological autopsy, is

performed to identify the disease that caused the death. Even when the cause of death has been determined ante mortem, clinical autopsies are frequently performed in order to investigate the disease process in situ and advance medical knowledge. A medico-legal (ML) autopsy is conducted to aid law enforcement agencies solve crimes by answering inquiries on the identity, cause of death, time of death, circumstances of death, etc. Despite having the identical process, the two autopsies are not the same in many ways.

The process for an autopsy is nearly identical to that of a clinical autopsy. Every autopsy performed for medical purposes is comprehensive. Therefore, in every case, a comprehensive internal and exterior examination of every organ is performed. The spinal cord and vertebral column are the exceptions. Their examination is time-consuming and laborious, hence it is only used in dire situations (e.g., head injuries, hanging injuries, vertebral column injuries, etc.). Usually, an extensive gross external and interior examination on the autopsy table itself determines the cause of death. Because of this, the forensic expert hardly ever uses a histological examination to determine the cause of death.

Toxicological analysis, conducted by the State Forensic Science Laboratory, is the method he uses to estimate the amount of toxins in bodily tissues both qualitatively and quantitatively. In these situations, opinions regarding the cause of death are held until post-mortem laboratory investigation results are available for analysis and correlation. As a result, the prosecution frequently needs the opinion of other agencies to determine the cause of death. Following the autopsy, the police constable who had accompanied the body informs the investigating officer of the cause of death in a sealed envelope.

Prerequisites for documentation in medical-legal autopsies

The following paperwork must be in the medical officer's possession before beginning a medico-legal autopsy:

- A letter from the investigating officer asking the medical officer to do the ML autopsy and giving him permission to take any evidence from the body for potential follow-up inquiries. The letter is an order even though it seems like a plea at times. If the

¹² Sharad Birdhi Chand Sarda v. State of Maharashtra 1984 AIR 1622

¹³ Kunhiraman v. Manoj (1991) DMC 499

concerned medical officer declines to do the autopsy, he may face legal repercussions.

• A duplicate of the "Panchanama" completed at the scene of death by the Investigation Officer (IO). This document depicts the prosecutor's final moments.

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The task of conducting death investigations and verifying the cause and manner of unusual and mysterious death falls under the purview of the medico- legal death investigation system. The medical examiner and coroner systems are widely used in medico- legal death investigations in the *United States of America*. "Currently, there are 11 states with coroner- only systems and 22 states have medical examiner system. Additionally, 18 states have mixed systems i.e both coroner and medical examiner."¹⁴ Both the systems equally serves the population of US. USA is facing the problem of shortage of skilled personnels to conduct such examination. This results in the overall challenge of insufficient death investigations in many jurisdictions. The death investigation system's adequacy for the expanding national demands of criminal justice and public health is the other significant challenge. The development of medico-legal death investigation can be done by establishing a medical examiner system that is referral- based, ensuring that medical experts with the necessary training and experience carry out death investigations, raising the investment on facilities and personnel and lastly developing uniformity and modernization in death investigation statues. In other countries like *Scotland*, deaths that require more information are looking into by the pricurator fiscal; and in other regions of *United Kingdom* like *England, Wales and Northern Ireland* the coroner investigates unnatural deaths.

Approach of the Judiciary on unnatural deaths CASE LAWS

A) In *Sowam Kisku And OR's. Vs. The State of Bihar*¹⁵, on August 18, 1983, 10 defendants beat

the dead Dugu Ram Das Kisku with a lathi, bhala, farsa, and tangi, causing his death. All of the accused were found guilty under Section 302 by the learned trial judge, and they were all given life sentences in jail. The accused appealed the aforementioned conviction to the Jharkhand High Court. The Hon'ble High Court rendered a decision on January 5, 2006, overturning the conviction due to insufficient evidence of the post-mortem report at the trial court and the absence of the autopsy's physician from the court.

B) The court in the case of *Vijender v. State of Delhi*¹⁶ held that the prosecution is required by Section 60 of the Evidence Act to present the best evidence that can be used to support a particular claim. Of course, it is true that a post-mortem report may be accepted into evidence under sub-section (2) of the Evidence Act in an extraordinary situation where any of the requirements of that section are met by demonstrating the same through another qualified witness. It demonstrates that even under section 32 of the Evidence Act, the post-mortem report would be pertinent if a qualified witness came to testify about it; otherwise, it would rock the foundations of criminal jurisprudence.

C) In the case of *Meera v. State of Rajasthan*¹⁷, it was revealed that the physician acknowledged that the medical records he had filled out had been destroyed, and that there was no record in the hospital's outdoor register indicating that the corpse had been taken there. The postmortem report makes no mention of the outdoor ticket number. In the aforementioned decision, it was decided that no documentary proof had been provided to support the doctor's assertion, save from his oral declaration. He acknowledged that he recognized this was a medicolegal situation, but he nevertheless destroyed the original notes in which the patient's care was documented. There is no evidence in one case study's post-mortem examination notes.

D) *Sowam Kisku and Others v. Bihar State*
The physician who performed the autopsy did not attend in court, thus the Jharkhand High Court overturned the conviction due to a lack of evidence

¹⁴ National Centre for Biotechnology Information, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK221926/> (last visited: 4 April, 2024).

¹⁵ *Sowam Kisku And OR's. Vs. The State of Bihar*, 2006CRILJ2526, 2006 CRI. L. J. 2526, (2006) 41 ALLINDCAS 882 (JHA), 2006 (5) ABR (NOC) 803 (JHA), 2006 (2) AIR JHAR

R 128, (2006) 4 RECCRIR 430, (2006) 2 EASTCRIC 99, 2006 (55) ACC (SOC) 34 (JHA),

¹⁶ *Vijender v. State of Delhi*, AIR 2006 UTTARAKHAND 802

¹⁷ *Meera vs State Of Rajasthan*, (2020) 07 RAJ CK 0003

in the trial court's post-mortem report. The physician who performed the postmortem examinations on the six deceased individuals in *Deepak Rai v. State of Bihar*¹⁸ supported the prosecution's claim that all of the deaths were caused by fire injuries. The post-mortem report supports the date and circumstances of the tragic event, thus the Honorable Supreme Court determined that the doctors' testimony, the post-mortem report, and the medical report are trustworthy sources of information.

CONCLUSION

The post-mortem report is a crucial document that forms the basis of the entire case. It assists the court and the investigative agencies in reaching an accurate determination on the manner, method and cause of death. However, as a matter of evidentiary precedent, the judiciary tends to accept medical testimony only when it is consistent with the prosecution's case. Considering this, the law does not allow for the adoption of post-mortem reports as substantial evidence in cases where there is disagreement about the documents' veracity. The post-mortem report is not being considered significant evidence by the court when it was not properly submitted to the defense and because the defense raised objection. In practical terms, regardless of how inconsistent it is with other evidences, this medical evidence should be used as corroborative evidence without any hesitations.

Moreover, the doctor is a medical expert witness, and his or her advice is based on the symptoms discovered during the examination. Doctors must expertly analyse the facts and they must express their opinions impartially, fairly and without favoring the calling parties. In order for a medical examination, such as post-mortem report, to determine the truth it must be considered unavoidable evidence and also accepted in its complete form. Forensic examinations, documentations and expert testimony play a crucial role in the legal process and help to provide justice, accountability and closure for families and society. The medico-legal investigation is driven by search for justice and truth while emphasizing the significance of forensic science in meeting the

requirements of both the medics and the legal system.

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