

SUICIDE ON RAILWAY TRACK

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Abstract

Suicide by train involves important emotional and financial costs to society that way is important to find methods to reduce the rail-related suicides. Injuries and deaths due to accidents are inescapable in the modern way of living. The accidental deaths are mostly due to the road traffic, but the deaths due to railway fatalities are also not negligible. Here, we are discussing the injuries in a 26-year-old male, found dead on 23.10.2010 at Oradea West railway station. Further, the history (suicidal note) and injuries over dead body points towards suicidal manner of death.

Keywords: railway track suicide, forensic identification, death, autopsy.

INTRODUCTION

Suicide method is any means by which one or more persons purposely kills themselves. Some people commit suicide by deliberately placing themselves in the path of a large and fast-moving vehicle, resulting in a fatal impact or may throw themselves directly in front of an oncoming train or drive a car onto the tracks and sit inside while they wait for the train to arrive. Postmortem examination study for data related to the age and sex of the victim, seasonal variations, type of train involved, part of the body affected and the pattern of injuries in different parts of the body and detailed autopsy examination and subsequent statistical analysis was done.

In the case report An unusual case of railway suicide Dr. Palenco et al mention that different authors point out two distinguished characteristics for railway track suicides:

- **the position of the body:** on most occasions suicide victims lie *transversely* on the track, causing transversal sectioning of the neck area, of the trunk area and of the extremities.
- **type of lesion:** *decapitation* with no other injury is regarded as typical.

In fatal railway incidents, whether it is due an accident or suicide, the victims suffer fatal injuries on major parts of the body.

Even though we can recognize a few differences between them, some general characteristics are presented:

- large scale tissue disruption of several parts of the body;

- the number of lesions is big and they can be found on different parts of the body;
- the fractures in the extremities are open or closed and are multiple and not rarely completely amputated;
- the phenomenon of evisceration is often seen;
- interestingly the nature of the lesions sometimes tells the examiner that the victim may have made an attempt to avoid being hit by the train.

This theory may be supported by the fact the only the extremities have been affected.

Case report

History: Scene of event: The prosecutors report included the following data: The subject XY, 22-year-old male, found dead on 21.11.2012 at at Oradea West railway station at Km 116+9".

The forensic autopsy report presented the following conclusions:

- a. Type of death: *violent*
- b. Cause of death: Crushing and sectioning of the neck vessels, decapitation
- c. Manner of death. Railway track suicide
- d. Lesions found on the body could have been produced in a railway accident, through crushing and sectioning by the wheels of the train
- e. Mechanism of death: *massive external bleeding*
- f. The victim's blood alcohol level at the time of death was 0 (zero) mg per 100 ml of blood
- g. Date of death 21.11.2012

The train had no outside stairs, which could have explained why there were no injuries on the other part of the body.

Information from the family

Discussions with family showed that he was going to take part at his sister's wedding next day. He was a construction worker and wall painter.

Identification clues

- a. Mobile found in the pocket of trousers with numbers to the family
- b. Piece of paper with address in the pocket of the trousers leading to the place where the subject had performed a painting job.
- c. Three days later after the death of JI a farewell letter was found by the family, in which the victim gives the reasons for his decision to terminate his life.

Farewell letter to the family

In a unorganised, uncivilised family you can't live without having remorse. I left everything go by itself, but I fought to create a future by myself. I had just one thought , to achieve something at the age of 27 but I followed another way and all my wishes ended. I believe that I started to destroy myself by the loss of money and work. It doesn't matter who you are in life, only if you don't depend on someone? To fight in loneliness is hard but I was punished. I only want just one thing; to be happy. But no matter how hard I tried, I still didn't succeed. Maybe it's because I was shy; I lost my words and myself. It is and it was a genetic disease. The loneliness takes all you have better but it kills you, of me when I was helped by Marcela with the amount of 700 Ron for rent and food. Not that money brought me to this situation, but the consciousness of holding the money and taking care of them [...] and the games (games or playing devices) destroyed me? I may had qualities but I had no brain [..]

I got humiliated in 2000. I had an apartment on Bumbacului Street; I was born there on the 15th on April 1984. Then I understood that I had to fight with life. I worked illegally in the construction business, where I earned quite enough money.[..] (I was a stupid kid)(that affected me) only when I was in a civilized place I tried to adapt.(sometimes it could be seen from the way I spoke that I had a bad expression(I was not a kid who was reading) I was set on one thing only; to make money and this was all I knew , and I liked it(but the games destroyed me)but I couldn't get more money . when I hadn't money I was calm, when I had, I was restless. When I saw a gambling place, I entered it and I didn't go home until I had no money, and I repeated this thing several times. Bad thoughts came because I said that I won't go to play anymore but I still did. I was an addict because I played 53000 million. With sorrow, mom , Marcela, Cami, Patri, Ioana, Demian, etc. Be happy for who you are because, I am not anymore.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Visual identification is not a favourable method in identification of severely decomposed or damaged bodies. In this particular case the sister came three times for identification, as she couldn't recognize the deceased due to severe disruptions of the face. At the same time the family refused to believe that it could be their son and he could have committed suicide. As they said" Our son is orthodox, and could not have done this to himself".

The two items, the mobile and the piece of paper with an address contributed to the process of identification of the body. Three days later the family found the farewell letter, which sustained that suicide was the cause of death. For forensic examiners it is not an easy task to establish the cause

of death when a body is found on a railway track. Generally the lesions on the body will not tell if it was suicide, homicide or accident. It is also very difficult for the examiners to distinguish between ante-mortem and post-mortem lesions.

The alcohol blood level in this case showed 0. This result must be questioned, as there was a massive hemorrhage. Studies have shown that heavy blood losses can give false negative alcohol blood level results.

Suggested Identification methods if is available: DNA-profile compared with family member, dental profile- the age and compare with ante-mortem dental records, fingerprints-compare with ante-mortem civil fingerprint database as the fingers where intact in this body

CONCLUSION:

Suicide by train involves emotional and financial costs to individuals and society as a whole. A combination of different strategies might significantly reduce its effect. Methods to reduce the rail-related suicides including: surveillance of stretches where suicides frequently occur; public access to the tracks should be made more difficult by erecting fences; trees and bushes should be cut down around the tracks in order to increase driver visibility.

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