Strangulation: What We have Learned: Part 2

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Overview

Part 1 – Oct 9, 2009, 10:40 to 12:00
- Assessing Risk – Jacquelyn Campbell
- Anatomy, Signs & Symptoms – Ruth Downing
- Laws, Defenses and Protocols – Gael Strack
- Q & A - All

Part 2 – Oct 10, 2009, 9:50 to 11:10
- Forensic Documentation – Ruth Downing
- Prosecution & Resources – Gael Strack
- Next Steps – Jacquelyn Campbell
- Q & A - All
Medical Evaluation

- Pulse oximetry
- Chest x-ray
  - Pulmonary edema
  - Subcutaneous emphysema
  - Pneumonia
  - Aspiration
Medical Evaluation

- Soft tissue neck x-ray
  - Tracheal deviation
  - Hyoid bone fracture
  - Soft tissue swelling/air
  - CT if positive findings
Medical Evaluation

- Head/Neck CT or MRI
- Carotid doppler if lateralizing neurologic signs or suspect vascular injuries
- Laryngoscopy
Diagnoses

- CT or MRI
Documentation

- Narrative history
- Checklists are helpful
- Photodocumentation
  - Patient demonstration
Describe Method of Strangulation

- From the front
- From behind
- One hand or 2 hands
- Carotid restraint
- Ligature
  - Object used
How did you feel?

- Rush to my head
- Felt fuzzy
- I couldn’t breathe
- I thought I was gonna die
What did the suspect say?

- “If I can’t have you no one can”
- He was laughing when I came to on the floor
- He told me no one would believe me since he doesn’t leave any marks
What did you see?

- “I saw the devil in his eyes”
- “He was crazy”
What were you thinking?

- “I knew he could kill me”
- “I thought I was going to die”
Why did he stop?

- “Someone knocked at the door”
- “I passed out”
- “My child started crying”
Documentation Chart for Attempted Strangulation Cases

Use this chart when a victim reports being "choked" or strangled.

**Symptoms and/or Internal Injury:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breathing Changes</th>
<th>Voice Changes</th>
<th>Swallowing Changes</th>
<th>Behavioral Changes</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Difficulty Breathing</td>
<td>* Rasp voice</td>
<td>* Trouble swallowing</td>
<td>* Agitation</td>
<td>* Dizzy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Hyperventilation</td>
<td>* Hoarse voice</td>
<td>* Painful to swallow</td>
<td>* Amnesia</td>
<td>* Blurred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Unable to breathe</td>
<td>* Coughing</td>
<td>* Neck Pain</td>
<td>* PTSD</td>
<td>* Tired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other.</td>
<td>* Unable to speak</td>
<td>* Nausea</td>
<td>* Headaches</td>
<td>* Fatigued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Vomiting</td>
<td>* Confusion</td>
<td>* Urination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Deviation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Use face & neck diagrams to mark visible injuries:**

- Face
- Eyes & Eyelids
- Nose
- Ear
- Mouth
- Under Chin
- Chest
- Shoulders
- Neck
- Head

- Reddened
- Scratched
- Bruised
- Abruision
- Reddened
- Scratched
- Bruised
- Abruision
- Reddened
- Scratched
- Bruised
- Abruision
- Pericarce on chest

**Please take photos and indicate the number of Photos taken:**

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Documentation Chart for Attempted Strangulation Cases
Use this chart when a victim reports being "choked" or strangled

Method and/or Manner:
How and where was the victim strangled?

- One Hand (R or L)
- Two hands
- Forearm (R or L)
- Knee/Feet

- Ligature (Describe):

- How long? ______ seconds ______ minutes  • Also smothered?

- From 1 to 10, how hard was the suspect’s grip? (Low): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 (high)

- Multiple attempts: ______  • Multiple methods: ______

- Is the suspect: RIGHT or LEFT handed? (Circle one)

What did the suspect say while he was strangling the victim, before and/or after?

Was she shushed simultaneously while being strangled? Straddled? Held against wall?

- Was her head being pounded against wall, floor or ground?

- What did the victim think was going to happen?

- How or why did the suspect stop strangling her?

- What was the suspect’s demeanor?

Describe what suspect’s face looked like during strangulation?

Describe Prior incidents of strangulation? Prior domestic violence? Prior threats?

MEDICAL RELEASE

To All Health Care Providers: Having been advised of my right to refuse, I hereby consent to the release of my medical/dental records related to this incident to law enforcement, the District Attorney’s Office and/or the City Attorney’s Office.

Signature: __________________________
Date: ______________

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Strangulation discharge instructions

Return for
- difficulty breathing
- trouble swallowing
- swelling of neck or throat
- increased hoarseness or voice change
- blurred vision
- severe headache
- weakness, numbness
Legal Issues

- Felony vs. Misdemeanor
Based on my training and experience, I know strangulation is serious and can “cause internal injuries.”

“I have received training in strangulation.”

“I have responded to *** domestic violence cases.”

“Victim’s injuries and symptoms were consistent with strangulation.”
San Diego City Attorney’s Office 1995 Study

- 300 attempted strangulation cases
  - 42% No visible injury
  - 20% Pain only
  - 22% Minor visible injury
  - 16% Visible injury

- The medical forensic assessment and documentation is the missing piece in providing safety for our patients
Remember

Seconds to Unconsciousness, Minutes to Death

- Patients can die up to 36 hours – or later-
- with no visible external injuries
Prosecution, Implementation & Resources

Gael Strack
Trial Preparation

- Notice to Defense Attorney
- Copy of Expert’s CV
- Meeting with expert
  - The Facts of Case
  - Questions to Ask
  - Charts
- Pre-trial motion with Judge
  - Information is Relevant
  - Expert is Qualified

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Developing your Local Expert

- Emergency room physician - Specialist
- Medical Examiner
- Certified Forensic Pathologist
- Forensic/SANE nurse
- Paramedic
- DV Detectives
- Anyone else?
Direct Examination of Expert

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Foundation of Expert

- Current position and duties
- Prior work experience
- Education
- Training
- Licenses & certificates
- Teaching experience
- Published writings
- Affiliation to professional Organizations
Attempted Strangulation

Questions

- Received training specific to strangulation?
- Examined patients who have reported being strangled?
- Applied your training to the examination of those patients?
- How many patients have you examined who reported being strangled?
- Previously testified as an expert?
- How many times?
Use suggested questions & customize to your case
Use Charts

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Vessels: arteries & veins

- Carotid artery
- Jugular vein
- Thyroid cartilage (with fracture shown)
- Hyoid bone
- Tracheal rings

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Scott Kessler, ADA

- Queens Borough District Attorney's Office.
  - Charge 6,000 domestic violence arrests each year in Queens.
  - Scott recently celebrated his 20th year at the DA's office.

- Forfeiture by Wrongdoing – The Next Frontier in the Prosecution of DV Cases
On-line Webinar on Forfeiture Hearings

- Go to www.familyjusticecenter.org
- Go to library
- Go to webinar
- Go to prior webinars
- Click: How to Build & Handle Forfeiture Cases in Court - Nov. 14, 2008 Download PDF or Video
- Join the Alliance as a “Friend”
Implementation

- Pass new legislation
- Develop an implementation team
- Schedule Training for everyone
- Incorporate training at the police academy
- Use at bail hearings, trial and at sentencing
- Use affidavits to attach to civil documents
- Develop your experts
- Establish protocols
- Train again and again and again
New Strangulation Video from IMO Productions

Portion of the proceeds are donated to Domestic Violence Organization, IMO Productions at www.imoproductions.com
Additional Resources:
Journal Articles
What’s New

■ Webinars:
  ■ Every month the alliance holds two free monthly webinars on family violence related topics
    ■ Long Term Consequences
    ■ DV Injuries & Medical Glossary
    ■ Immigration Issues & Law Enforcement Protocols
    ■ FJC Model – A look at various centers
  ■ Join as a member – become a Friend
  ■ Join our mailing list – online or give me your business card
Attend our Next Conference

SAVE THE DATE!
10th Annual
International
Family Justice Center
Conference
April 27-29, 2010
San Antonio, TX

Artwork: www.ClaudiaFernety.com
Excellent Resource

- What do we do when the victim Answers Yes
  - Dr. Taliaferro
- Laws related to DV
  - Gael Strack, JD
- How to prepare the optimal response
  - Dr. McCaw
- Volcanopress.com
The Challenge for the Nation

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Next Steps

Jacquelyn Campbell

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How to Reach us:

- Jacquelyn C. Campbell, PhD, RN, FAAN
  - [www.rwjfnursefacultyscholars.org](http://www.rwjfnursefacultyscholars.org)
  - 410 955-2778; [jcampbel@son.jhmi.edu](mailto:jcampbel@son.jhmi.edu)
- Ruth Downing, Forensic Healthcare Consulting
  - [ruth@ForensicHealthcare.com](mailto:ruth@ForensicHealthcare.com), 740.815.8167
- Gael Strack, JD, CEO & Co-Founder
  - [www.familyjusticecenter.org](http://www.familyjusticecenter.org)
  - [gael@nfjca.org](mailto:gael@nfjca.org) or 760.445.3559