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Scopo:

Some of the primary goals in Forensic Medicine are to determine the manner of death and to differentiate self-inflicted from third person-inflicted injuries. However, in some cases judgment can be very difficult because the morphological findings at the corpse as well as the case circumstances may hint both to suicide and homicide.

A 31-year-old male was found inanimate on the sidewalk in front of his second floor balcony, The man was almost naked wearing only stockings. In the man's flat a bloody knife. Blood drippings could be spotted next to his bed, on the floor to his balcony and in the bulwark. The front door as well as the balcony window were wide open. Neighbors claimed to have loud male voices in the flat before finding of the corpse.

Materiali e metodi:**Post-mortem examinations:****Post mortem CT**

A native CT scan was performed on the next morning prior to autopsy using a Somatom Definition AS 64 (Siemens, Forchheim, Germany).

Autopsy:

Immediately after CT an autopsy was performed by a board-certified forensic pathologist according to the autopsy standard protocol of the Institute of Forensic Medicine in Bern. The cause of death was determined as a competing of traumatic brain injury against internal and external blood loss and suffocation due to larger amounts of blood in the airways.

Toxicology findings:

Immunological screening in the urine was positive for amphetamines, benzodiazepines and LSD.

Forensic findings and police investigations:

Police investigations revealed that the deceased suffered from increasing schizophrenic disorder and had been admitted to a psychiatric hospital weeks before his death. In the flat no suicide note but several books regarding death and the meaning of life were found. A bloody Jeans and a bloody t-shirt were found in the flat. These clothes showed no defects respectively signs of sharp violence.

Risultati:

A complex suicide of an 31 years old man with diagnosis of psychiatric disorder committed by stabbing himself with a large knife and after that jumping from a height is reported.

The investigation of death scene and autopsy processes must be performed closely in complex suicides in which more than one method is used. The interdisciplinary cooperation between police investigators, ballistic experts, crime lab representatives, forensic pathologists and radiologists was an necessary prerequisite for the comprehensive elucidation of this case.

Conclusioni:

This case illustrates how close collaboration between forensic pathologists, radiologists (CT should be considered as a

fundamental tool complementary to autopsy) and police investigators can lead to optimal outcomes in forensic investigation.

Informazioni Personali:

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Note Bibliografiche:

Immagini:



Figure 1: Four pictures of the accident site

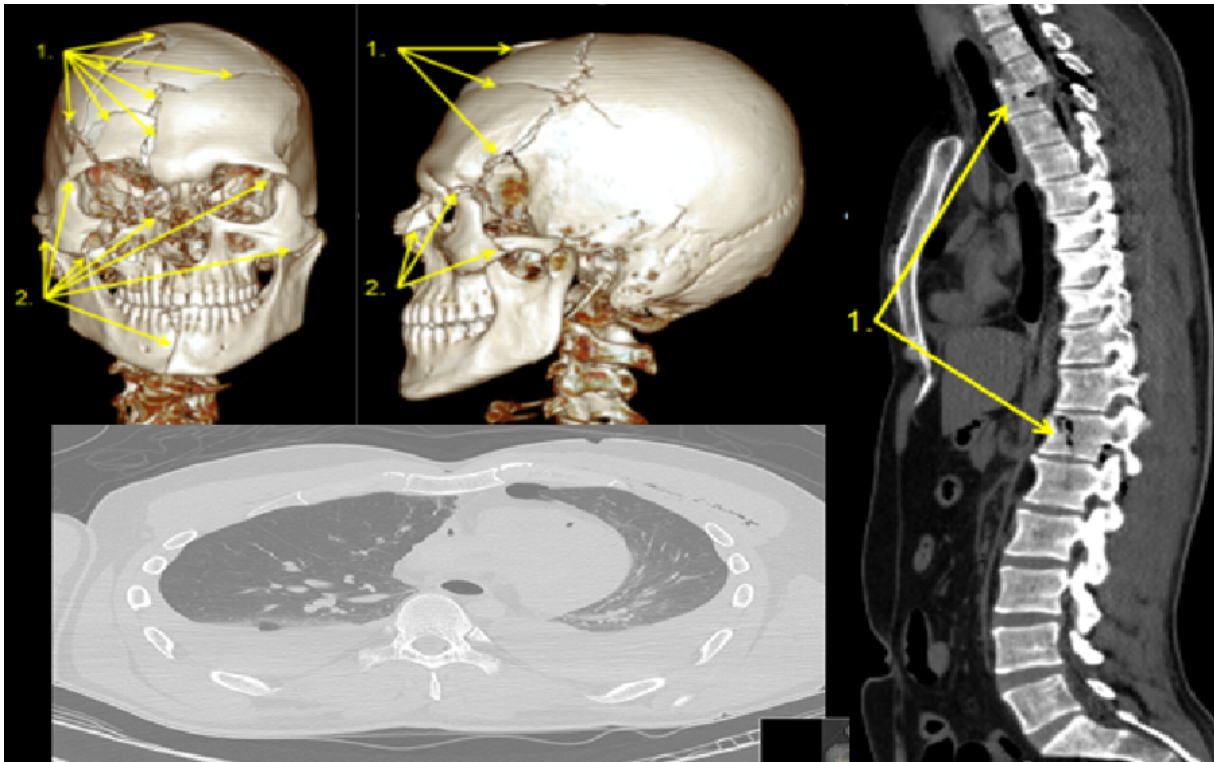


Figure 2: a,b,c,d (a,b) 3D CT image of the skull with front view Caption: skull fractures (c) CT scan, axial image. Skin laceration due to the stab wounds, small pneumothorax and large pleural effusion (hemorrhage). Presence of little amounts of gas in the right atrium and right ventricle of the heart as well in the left pectoral soft tissue. (d) Sagittal CT slice image of the Spine with view from the left shows vertebral fracture T12 and listhesis (shift) T2-T3.

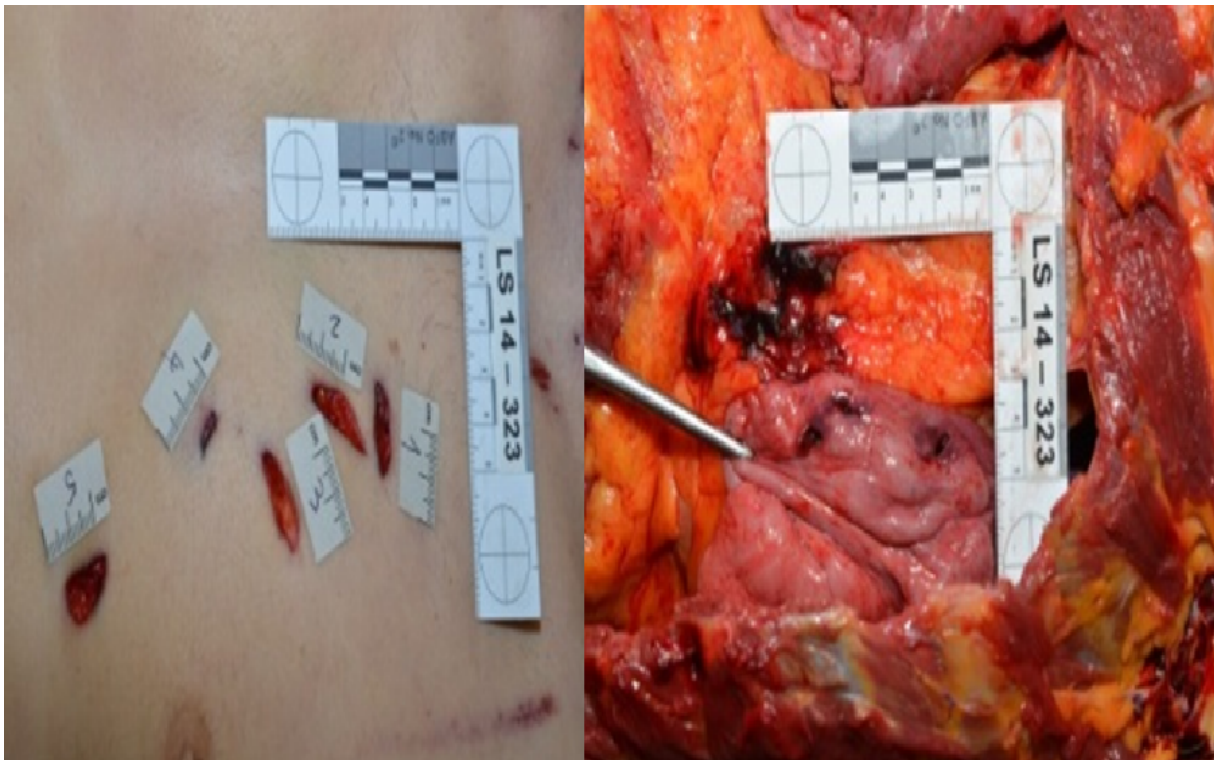


Fig 3: a,b Five stab wounds (No. 1 - 5) on the left chest with the left division of the subcutaneous fat and muscle tissue, the intercostal muscles, the pleura and the lung tissue of the left upper lobe.