



MULTIPLE HOMICIDAL STABS BY SCREW DRIVER: A CASE REPORT

Forensic Medicine

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ABSTRACT

Penetrating facial trauma presents a wide spectrum of injuries and management difficulty, due to the potential injuries that can be caused by the weapon used. This is a report of a 42-years-old man who presented with multiple penetrating facial injury by screwdriver. The attempt is given from the front with aggressive intent. Proper examination, radiological evaluation and early decision-making with a multidisciplinary approach provide an optimal treatment outcome in such cases

KEYWORDS

Screwdriver, facial trauma, multidisciplinary approach

INTRODUCTION

With an increasing crime rate there has been an increase in deaths due to stab injury. Screwdrivers are only rarely used as weapons. However, when used in an assault on the face the concentration of force into the small area at the tip of these rigid tools may enable penetration into the facial bones. Once through the bone the shaft of the screw-driver may then pivot around the entry point, causing an arc of injury¹. Trauma injury is the sixth leading cause of death worldwide, and interpersonal violence is one of the major contributors in particular regarding injuries to the head and neck.² This case report is the case of multiple stabbing over the face and a stab over abdomen with homicidal intention. This report characterizes the features of injuries that may be inflicted by screwdrivers due to their ready availability, ease of handling, and sharpness, screwdrivers are surprisingly rarely used in fatal assaults.

Case Report

A 42 years old male was brought to the Emergency department of Sarojini Naidu Medical College, Agra with the alleged history of physical assault.

On examination it was found to have multiple penetrating stabs wound over the face by screw driver and a stab wound over the abdomen. Patient was taken for emergency laparotomy and facial dressing. CT scan was advised to analyse the extent of injury.

RESULT:

The most striking feature of these injuries were multiple puncture wounds showing a cruciate shaped consistently measuring approximately 5 × 5 mm with varying depths of 1-2cm. (Fig. 1) spread all over the face (left angle of eye, left ala of nose, rt. Side cheek, rt. Angle of mouth) A puncture wound over the abdomen showing intestine out of the ostium created by puncture wound (Fig 3). CT showing maxillofacial injuries (Fig 2)

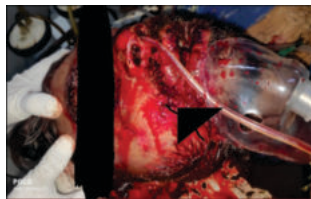


Fig 1: Puncture wound demonstrating cruciate pattern

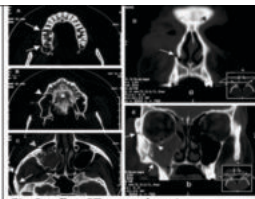


Fig 2 : flat CT scan showing maxillofacial injuries



Fig 3 : A stab wound over abdomen with the perforated intestine protruding out of the ostia created by the wound



Fig 4 : A typical screwdriver with Cruciate head and single edge

DISCUSSION

Screwdrivers can be used to inflict deep puncture wounds that may penetrate bone, including the skull, and cause lethal organ injuries. Although it has been suggested that Screwdrivers cause typical incised wounds³, this depends greatly on the sharpness of their tips. In this case report the wound is depicting the cruciate head screwdriver as the shape of wound is cruciate. This case report is eye catcher because of rare pattern of facial assault by screwdriver with multiple attempts. The intestine got perforated and protruded out of ostium of wound.

Nikombua et al⁴ conducted the study showing the pattern of injury sustained in assault and it was found that 77percent of examined victims sustained head and neck injuries with most of them are facial injuries. But the mechanisms of injuries were different and no injuries were given by screwdriver. Screwdrivers have been rarely reported in the literature in cases of fatal assaults that have most often involved penetrating trauma to the torso or head^{5,6}. This multiple attempts of injuries by screw driver make this case report unique, it shows the brutality and it should also keep in thought that alleged may be suffering from psychiatric illness.

CONCLUSION

This case demonstrates a systemic recording of injuries showed the exact nature of the weapon that was used in the assault. In cases where a weapon has been removed from the scene, this may be an extremely useful finding in focusing investigations on looking for a screwdriver rather than another type of sharp object.

Also, CT scan is proved to be useful to detect the depth of injuries and fractures associated with it along with the complications due to injuries. So it is required to integrate radiological investigation with the conventional methods of medico legal examination.

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