



KITE STRING INJURY CAUSING CUT THROAT : A CASE REPORT

Forensic Medicine

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ABSTRACT

Kite-flying holds a cherished tradition in India, with a long history of evolving kite-making and flying skills. In the past, cotton threads were commonly used as kite strings (manja), but in recent times, more affordable and stronger Chinese manja made from nonbiodegradable synthetic fibres has become prevalent. Unfortunately, this shift has led to an alarming increase in dangerous kite string-related injuries. These incidents affect not only kite-flyers but also pose risks to two-wheeler riders and pedestrians. The injuries caused by kite string accidents can vary from lacerations to potentially life-threatening outcomes. Although there have been few documented cases and reports on kite-related injuries in medical literature, the severity of these incidents should not be underestimated. I present a case, with a tragic instance involving a subject who sustained a fatal kite string injury. This emphasizes the need for emergency physicians to be aware that seemingly minor injuries from kite flying can lead to significant neck injuries and even death. In conclusion, the popularity of kites in India has brought joy and cultural significance, but it is essential to address the safety concerns associated with the use of synthetic kite strings. Increased awareness and precautions are vital to prevent further accidents and protect both kite enthusiasts and the general public from such unfortunate incidents.

KEYWORDS

Injuries, kite string (manja), neck vessels, neck zones

INTRODUCTION

Kite flying is a popular activity in India, celebrated during festivals like Makar Sankranti and Basant Panchami. It's especially significant in states like Gujarat, Telangana, Rajasthan, and North India. Kite flying is also part of Independence Day celebrations on August 15th. However, this tradition has led to injuries, as people use dangerous methods to make their kite strings strong, such as coating them with glass and glue. Chemical or synthetic fiber-based strings have also become common, causing a rise in dangerous kite-string-related injuries. These sharp strings can get tangled around objects like trees and buildings, posing obstacles to people and causing injuries like neck lacerations and fractures. This text discusses a case, where a person sustained a cut throat injury leading to death.

Case History

A 34 year old man died after his throat was allegedly slit by a piece of glass coated kite string (popularly known as Chinese manjha) in northeast Delhi's Shastri Park area on 11th August 2023.

After which he was taken to Sushruta Trauma Centre where he was declared brought dead. As shown in Fig. 1.



Figure 1

Autopsy Findings

-Lacerated wound over anterior aspect of neck in the middle of thyroid cartilage at the level of Adams apple about 18cm x 4cm x 3cm with grazed abrasion over the margins with muscles of the neck is cut lacerated along with and trachea.

- Both jugular vein right and left is transected.

- Extravasation of blood present in the surrounding soft tissues of neck. As shown in Fig. 2



Figure 2

Cause Of Death

- Death occurred due to shock and haemorrhage as a result of injury to the trachea and neck vessels produced by kite string.
- Injury ante mortem in nature possible in manner as suggested.

DISCUSSION

Chinese manjha, with glass and metal-coated synthetic threads, poses hidden risks. It slices skin on impact, unlike cotton thread, and conducts electricity when wet. Past incidents, like deaths and injuries, underscore its peril: 2019: Child's death on Badarpur flyover; 18-year-old's throat slit in Timarpur.

2018: Severe neck injury on Nangloi flyover. 2017: Burns from high-tension wire in Abul Fazal Enclave. 2016: Policeman entangled on bike; child's throat cut near Rani Bagh; child's neck slit during joyride. Delhi Police recorded 271 cases involving Chinese manjha, a dangerous kite string, from 2020 to 2022. Legal sections like Environment Protection Act and IPC 336/337 were applied due to injuries caused. Most cases were in Outer, West, East, South West, and North East districts.

Over 1,500 bird injury calls were reported to PETA. Delhi imposed penalties for Chinese manjha, promoting safe kite flying with regular threads. Tragic 2022 incidents include deaths and injuries due to the string.

CONCLUSIONS

Kite flying, while deeply ingrained in India's culture, can lead to serious injuries from kite-string incidents. Banning it is impractical due to its cultural significance. Raising awareness through electronic media and encouraging safety measures like wearing gloves and protective clothing is crucial. Safety precautions include avoiding power lines to prevent life-threatening electrical shocks and refraining from flying kites near roads to prevent accidents involving both kite-flyers and vehicles. Applying frames on two-wheelers as shown in Fig. 3



Figure 3

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