

**Criminalistics
St. Joseph's College
Rensselaer, Indiana**

**ELEMENTS OF
FORENSIC PATHOLGY**

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST: NONE

OFF-LABEL USE: NONE

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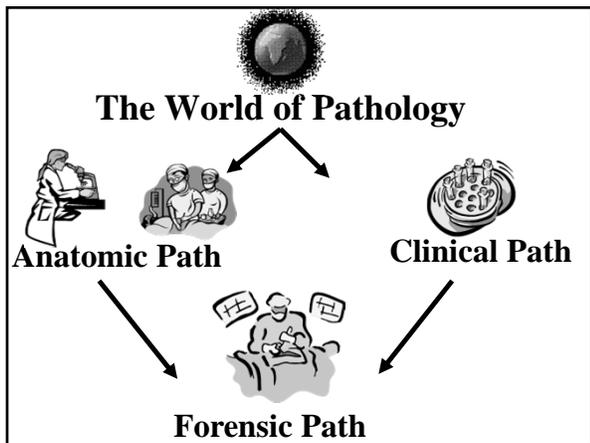
**National Institute of Health
National Institute of Mental Health
National Cancer Institute
National Institute of Justice/USDoJ
US Navy / Dept of Defense**

Indiana law (IC 16-39-7.1-3) makes it unlawful, punishable as a class D felony (IC 16-39-7.1-6), to display, distribute or exploit autopsy photographs for any purpose other than medical, law enforcement, or public safety education. These photographs cannot be duplicated nor transmitted to any other person. Case identities are strictly confidential.

Crime, drama, analyzing evidence, interrogating suspects. Just like Patricia Cornwell, CSI, NCIS, Crossing Jordan, Quincey, and Men in Black.

Is this the real world of forensic pathology?

In Indiana, any death which occurs due to accidental injury, self-inflicted injury or as an act of homicidal violence must be reported to the elected county coroner. In addition, the coroner gets called to provide a death certificate for anyone for whom no physician is willing to sign a certificate. The coroner MAY elect to get an autopsy in any of these cases.



Forensic Pathology

That medical subspecialty in which we examine the body after death, through the performance of an autopsy, to determine the Cause and Manner of death, particularly in cases where death has been sudden, unexpected, unusual, and oftentimes violent.

60% of cases are natural deaths.
30% of cases are accidents.
5% of cases are suicides.
A few are violent crimes.

Alcohol, tobacco, and / or drugs are involved in at least 75% of these cases.

TYPES OF ASSAULTIVE INJURIES

Blunt force

contusion, abrasion, laceration



Incised wounds

stabs and cuts



Gunshot wounds

entrance and exit, range of fire



INCISED WOUNDS

Stab: penetrate deep into body

Cut: superficial on skin surface

Superficial incised wound: cut

Injuries of Forcible Sexual Assault

- Injury of sexual contact areas -- genitalia, anus, female breast -- requiring that force was used to create the injury
- **“Rape” can occur without any injury**

FABLES IN FORENSIC PATHOLOGY

We cannot determine the caliber of weapon from the size of a bullet hole.

We cannot tell if the assailant was left versus right handed.

FABLES IN FORENSIC PATHOLOGY

A body will not move, nor “sit up” after death due to muscle contraction. Rigor is only stiffening, never contraction.

Hair and fingernails do not grow after death. It can look that way due to mummification of the skin.

Drowning cannot ever be proven.

**FABLES IN FORENSIC
PATHOLOGY**

We cannot tell if an injury was painful. Nor, can we predict the physical capabilities of an injured person.

National Organizations

National Assoc. Of Medical Examiners
www.thename.org

American Academy of Forensic Sciences
www.aafs.org

College of American Pathologists
www.cap.org

A forensic pathologist spends more time sitting in court listening to lawyers argue, than in the morgue performing autopsies.