

DEATHS CAUSED BY DROWNING DESPITE EARLIER RESUSCITATION IN FORENSIC AUTOPSIES PERFORMED WROCLAW MEDICAL UNIVERSITY IN 2010

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Introduction: Drowning cases are quite common in both clinical physicians and forensic medicine practice, and result from accidents, but also - not so often - criminal acts. In the literature often the statement is found that because of specific circumstances of drowning - especially lowered temperature of the body because of immersion in cold water - there are bigger chances of survival and proper subsequent neurological status in case of drowning than other types of asphyxia.

Material and Methods: Autopsy reports of the Department of Forensic Medicine of Medical University of Wrocław of 2010 were reviewed to find the cases in which the cause of death was the drowning, but after prior resuscitation. An additional special drowning case from year 2005 was also described in detail. **Results:** Autopsy reports consisted of 5 cases - including 4 males and 1 woman - aged from 6 to 25 years. They drowned mainly because of accidents, in one case most probably because of criminal act and in one case there was serious suspicion of a pedophile abuse background. Accidental drowning happened in summer both in rivers and lakes and in swimming pools. In one case there was a concurrence of death causes - the drowned person suffered also from choking on vomit. A drowning case most probably because of criminal act happened in a bathtub in a flat, filled most probably with initially hot water. In all the described cases resuscitation was started, but despite proper medical activities the drowned individuals were pronounced dead. Typical distension of the lungs have been visible during autopsy, although not too clearly visible in all cases. **Conclusions:** The autopsy reports show that the cases of deaths because of drowning preceded by resuscitation were rare - this can reinforce the opinion stated in the literature that resuscitation is highly effective in cases of drowning, when it is justified to start it. Consistently, the young age of all described drowning victims can suggest that in case of children and young individuals more often the resuscitation is being started even in hopeless cases. In all analyzed drowning cases there were present factors negatively influencing the survival chances - criminal activities of surrounding people, hot environment, choking on vomit. Prolonged resuscitation can interfere with typical autopsy findings in drowning cases, changing the typical presentation of acute lung emphysema.