Strangulation Assault Awareness

Improving our response
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Overview

- Choking
- Strangulation
  - Manual
  - Ligature
- Important structures of the neck
- Signs and Symptoms
- Improved responses
Choking

Anatomy of the Larynx

- Tongue
- Epiglottis
- Supraglottis
- Vocal cord
- Glottis
- Subglottis
- Esophagus
- Trachea

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Larynx
Manual Strangulation
Ligature Strangulation
Vital structures of the neck

1. Carotid Artery
2. Jugular Vein
3. Hyoid Bone
4. Thyroid Cartilage
5. Cricoid Cartilage
6. Tracheal Rings
A Brief Medical Overview
• The brain needs a **continuous** supply of **oxygen**

• Without oxygen, brain cells quickly malfunction and die

• The **respiratory** system and **cardiovascular** system must work together perfectly

• Compromise of a either system may rapidly produce a **bad** outcome
**Signs** – what the officer is able to observe

**Symptoms** – what the victim reports they are experiencing
San Diego DA Case Study:

- 50% of cases - no visible sign/injury
- 35% of cases - slightly visible sign/injury
- 15% of cases - clearly visible sign/injury

Content Warning
Signs of Strangulation
Strangulation injuries

- Redness
- Bruising
- Scratch marks
- Abrasions
- Swelling
- Drooping eyelid/face
Strangulation injuries

- Ligature patterns
- Swollen tongue/lips
- Bleeding - nose/ears
- Unexplained bumps on head
**Signs: Head**

- Bruising behind ear
- Bleeding in ear
- Petechiae
- Bumps on head
- Facial droop
Petechial hemorrhage

- 1 - 2 mm in diameter
- Will not blanch
- Cannot be palpated
- Occur in a "geographic" pattern
- Eyes, ears, nose, inside mouth, scalp
Subconjunctival hemorrhage

- Visible in “whites” of eyes
- Can be seen in conjunction with petechial hemorrhage
- Usually painless
Symptoms of Strangulation

I would always remember soreness and bruises on my neck. [My neck] would be sore for four or five days.

- Survivor
Neurological

- Memory loss
- Loss of consciousness
- Weakness, dizziness
- Incontinence
- Vomiting
- Headaches
Voice and throat

- Raspy/hoarse voice
- Unable to speak
- Painful/difficult swallowing
- Sore throat
- Stridor
Death, tracheal injury, neck, breathing, unconsciousness, fractured clavicle, swelling of the neck, miscarriage, breathing and swallowing problems, throat edema, voice changes, bleeding, lung damage, vision changes, balance disorders, internal bleeding, memory loss, suicidal ideation, suicidal ideation, memory loss, memory problems, delayed fatality, right side weakness, hearing loss, ringing in the ears, vision change, sensitivity, internal bleeding, death.
How many pounds of pressure to open a can of soda?

20 pounds
How many pounds of pressure for a handshake?

60 – 80 pounds
How many pounds of pressure to pull a trigger?

4 - 6 pounds
Content Warning
Strangulation can kill minutes, hours, or days after the event

Victims are 750% more likely to be killed by their abuser

Abusers who strangle are more likely to have deadly confrontations with their families, law enforcement, and the public.

Strangulation is DANGEROUS
Improved Investigations

- Strangulation investigation card and form
- **Trauma**-informed interviews
- 911 calls
- Photography
- Medical evaluations/records
- Follow-up photography and voice recordings
**Improved Victim Safety**

- Call EMS if any sign/symptoms are present
- Develop relationships with your medical providers and educate them.
Questions