STAB INJURY TO THE HEART

There are two specimens. A heart and the overlying anterior chest wall skin. Skin has a single spindle shaped, vertically placed injury measuring about 3cm in length. Margins are regular and lower end of the injury has an acute angle while the upper end is obtuse. Those features are suggestive of a stab by a sharp weapon with a single cutting edge.

There are two cut injuries in the anterior wall of the heart involving both ventricles, placed perpendicular to each other. The cut injury in the left ventricle is about 2cm, placed parallel to the anterior descending branch of the left coronary 4 cm from the aortic root. The margins are regular. The cut injury in right ventricle is about 2.5cm in length and one margin is irregular.

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM A VICTIM OF STAB INJURIES TO THE ANTERIOR CHEST AT AUTOPSY

The skin injury (A) shows upper end as obtuse while the lower end is acutely angled leading to an opinion of a single cutting edge weapon. B: injury in the chest and alleged weapon together C: Stab injury in Right ventricle (Curtesy of Dr.PASE, Department of Forensic Medicine, Ragama)