

Legal Medicine and Toxicology Module

Tutorial 02: Head Injury, Regional Injuries, Category of hurt, Death

Question 1

A man was found dead on the road with a laceration on the scalp over the left side and a large bruise on the left side of the lower chest. Internal examination of the head revealed extensive scalp contusions, depressed comminuted fracture (mosaic fracture) on the left parieto-temporal region, intra-cranial haemorrhage and brain contusions. Internal examination of the chest and abdomen revealed fractures of the ribs on the left lower chest with haemothorax and rupture of spleen with haemoperitoneum.

- 1.1. State the intra-cranial haemorrhages, which are likely in this case in descending order of frequency giving reasons.
- 1.2. State what other features you would like to know about the injuries described above to give your opinion regarding the weapon/agent which had caused the head injury and the force with which it was used or struck.
- 1.3. State what other features you would like to know about the injuries described to determine that they were caused by a fall and not an assault.
- 1.4. Explain briefly the mechanism of the formation of the depressed comminuted fracture if it was due to a fall on the road.
- 1.5. Describe briefly the changes in the brain which would indicate raised intracranial pressure if a patient with similar injuries survived for a few days and died without surgery.
- 1.6. State the category of hurt of each injury with explanations
- 1.7. A patient with similar head injuries survived after surgery but fixed to a mechanical ventilator. After a few days, the Intensive Care consultant diagnosed brain death. Explain briefly the procedure the consultant should follow to take the deceased off from the ventilator.