



The Rise of Virtual Autopsy

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Editorial

Forensic autopsy practice in its current shape remains the gold standard however radiological imaging is continuously developing and is becoming more known and acceptable within forensic pathology practice. Radiology has been used for years for determining age of individuals and assessing bone injuries. However with the development of new radiological techniques like Computerized Tomography (CT) and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) and their application to assess soft and hard injuries has ushered a new era in forensic pathology. The technique having originated in Sweden has now become a standard technique in major centres in Japan, US, Australia, and many European countries. The most important immediate steps needed are that these examinations are explicitly defined within the statutes of law as well as thorough quality control procedures developed, so that the procedures are standardized and become more acceptable for the courts of law. Some of this work has already started e.g. in the UK in 2013 the Chief coroner issued guidance on post-mortem imaging [1]. The Royal College of Pathologists UK has outlined the standards of post-mortem imaging examinations being performed for medicolegal purposes [2]. This report has determined the limitations of the procedures, detailed guidelines and also provided

a CT protocol for post-mortem imaging. The Society of Radiographers has recently produced their standards for post-mortem imaging examinations and has included the need for competency standards for radiographers and the need for auditing the equipment besides other important aspects [3]. There is acute need for global standardized best practice procedures for using this tool in forensic pathology in a more robust manner [4]. It still remains to be seen if post-mortem imaging will replace traditional autopsy but it has definitely risen to be an effective adjunct procedure.

References

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3. (2015) Standards of Radiographic Practice for Post-Mortem Cross-Sectional Imaging.
4. Ruder TD (2015) What are the greatest challenges or barriers to applying post-mortem imaging in paediatric radiology? *Pediatr Radiol* 45: 47.