

Commentary on: Tse R, Langlois N, Winskog C, Byard RW. An assessment of the usefulness of routine histological examination in hanging deaths. *J Forensic Sci* 2012;57(4):976–8.

Sir,

I read with interest the study performed by Tse and colleagues entitled, “An Assessment of the Usefulness of Routine Histological Examination in Hanging Deaths,” being recently available online by *Journal of Forensic Sciences* (1). They randomly selected 100 victims of suicidal hanging and performed complete internal, external, and routine histological examinations on them after full police and coronial investigation. They finally concluded that the results of histological examination of tissues were all incidental to the cause, mechanism, and manner of death and that histological examination of tissues could be omitted from the investigation of uncomplicated deaths resulting from hanging. Interestingly, in several available textbooks of forensic medicine, not only histological examinations but also internal examinations have been declared to be unnecessary in suicidal hanging. Of these textbooks is *Forensic Pathology of Trauma* that declares that an investigating medical examiner or coroner can limit the postmortem examination to only external examina-

tion in victims of certain type of death (e.g., suicidal hanging and massive trauma) *based on adequate background information (for example, an uncomplicated suicidal hanging as the authors of the present study mentioned (2)).* As it is obvious, they even do not believe in the necessity of performing internal examination, and we, ourselves, generally do not perform histological examination in a case of suicidal hanging. What made the authors believe this approach to be necessary enough to be evaluated in such a research? Thank you for this interesting study.

References

1. Tse R, Langlois N, Winskog C, Byard RW. An assessment of the usefulness of routine histological examination in hanging deaths. *J Forensic Sci* 2012;57(4):976–8.
2. Shkrum MJ, Ramsay DA. The complete autopsy. In: Shkrum MJ, Ramsay DA, editors. *Forensic pathology of trauma: common problems for the pathologist*, 1st edn. Totowa, NJ: Humana Press, 2007;1–22.

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