



Information

Facts About Intimate Partner Strangulation

◇2009◇

What is known about Strangulation?

- Terminology is important. “Choking” is the obstruction of a person’s airway caused by an internal object within the body, such as accidentally swallowing a piece of food. “Strangulation” or suffocation is a form of asphyxia characterized by closure of the blood vessels and air passages of the neck as a result of external pressure on the neck.
- A study of 300 cases of strangulation survivors conducted by the San Diego City Attorney’s Office revealed that in 50% of the cases there were no visible markings to the neck and 35 % had only minor injuries.
- SIGNS of strangulation can include: small red spots on the face or neck area or in the eye, swelling in throat or neck area, blood shot eyes, bruising on the throat or any surrounding area, i.e. behind ears, hairline or face, abrasions, marks around the neck caused by an object, i.e. necklace, shirt.
- SYMPTOMS of strangulation can include: voice changes, hoarseness, raspy voice, painful swallowing, changes or difficulty breathing to the inability to breath, loss of consciousness or a period of time you can not remember, loss of memory or behavior changes, or involuntary urination or defecation during or after the incident.

Gael Strack JD, Dr. George McClane & Dean Hawley, 2001, Family Justice Center Alliance, San Diego

Serious injuries can happen quickly:

- Only 8-11 pounds of pressure on the throat area for approximately 10 seconds causes loss of consciousness.
- Within 30 seconds and longer, temporary or permanent brain damage may occur. Low oxygen to the brain can cause a permanent vegetative state. Continuous obstruction of the carotid arteries, the jugular veins, or the airway will produce death by complete loss of oxygen (Asphyxia). *Dr. George McClane, and Gael Strack, JD*

What is the connection between strangulation and homicide?

- Strangulation accounts for 10% of all violent deaths annually in the U.S. *Funk & Schuppel, 2003; McClane, Strack & Hawley, 2001*
- 43% of domestic homicide victims had been strangled by their perpetrator within the last 12 months. *Campbell, et al, CDC, 2002*
- From 1989 to 2005 in Minnesota, thirteen percent of all women murdered by an intimate partner were strangled to death, and seventeen percent of all children murdered by a family member were strangled to death. *Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women, 2005 Special Femicide Report*

Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women

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