

Fatality in body packers; a case report from Saudi Arabia

Dr. Dalia M. Al-Saif, MBBS, SBFLM

Forensic Medicine Consultant

Center of Forensic and Legal Medicine

Dammam, Saudi Arabia

Body Packing

- Hiding illicit drugs in bodies

- Purpose:

Cross borders

Hiding drugs once detected by police



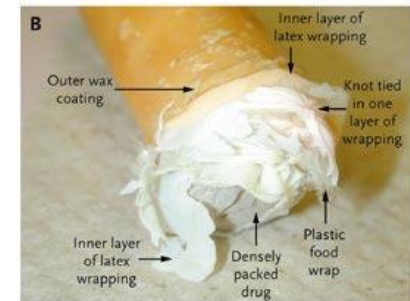
Packed drugs

- Heroin
- Cocaine
- Amphetamine
- Cannabis
- Leidocaine
- Diazepam



Packing techniques

- Manual
- Machine
- Materials used:
Latex
Foil
Grease proof paper
Glass ampoules



Where in the body

- Stomach
- Rectum
- Vagina
- Ear



Fate of body packers

- Escape with it
- Detected and saved
- Die due to complications
- Incidentally discovered after death of other reasons

Death in body packers

- Leakage
- Intestinal obstruction
- Peritonitis
- Perforation
- Airway obstruction



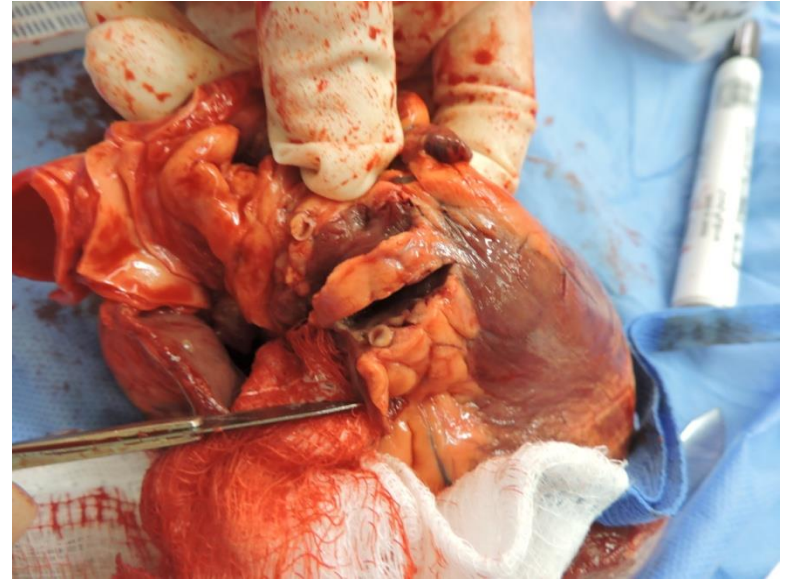
Case

- 37 years old Saudi man
- Was in custody when he developed pain (unspecified)
- Transferred to the hospital and announced dead

Post mortem examination

- 7 days after death
- No putrefaction
- 2 small abraded contusions over the forehead
- A foreign body (rubber with whitish substance) was found in the mouth

- Autopsy:
Brain petechiae
Edema of lungs
Narrowing of both coronary arteries
(75% and 80% by histopathological examination)



- Stomach and intestine:
 - 10 rounded foreign bodies
 - 2 cm in diameter
 - a layer of elastic rubber and inner layer of plastic cover
 - Seven of them contained white powder
 - 3 filled with grey dough like substance



Toxicological investigation

- Blood revealed a level of 3.66mg/l metamphetamin
- The bags contained a total of 25gm of metamphetamin and a total of 19gm of tetrahydrocannabinol

- Autopsy 7 days after death... drug redistribution?? peripheral blood.
- The ruptured bag in the mouth
- Coronary narrowing as a cause of death??

Cause of death

- Intoxication with metamphetamin



- Body packers were reported in Arab countries previously (Abedzadeh AA et al. 2019) but no reported cases of fatality
- Metamphetamin is rarely packed in the body
- Manual poor packing method

When to suspect and how to investigate

- Frequent travelers
- Fever, cardiac symptoms



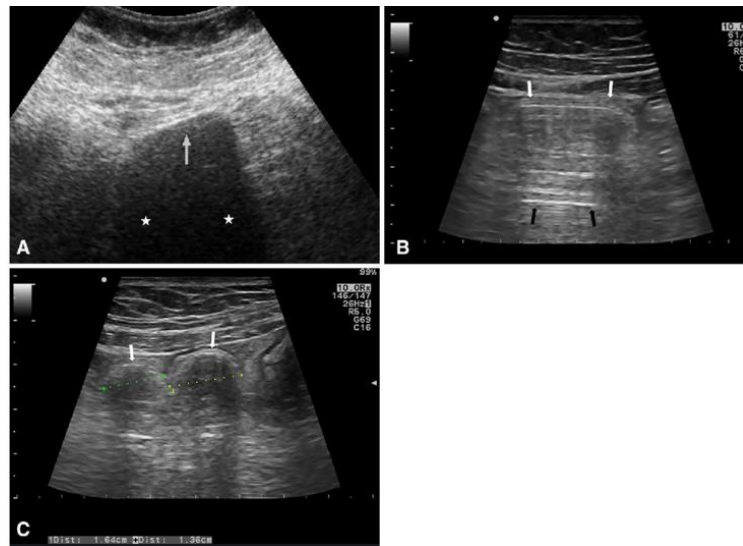
Investigations

- Blood and urine analysis



Radiological investigations

- Ultrasound



- Plain abdominal x-ray

Tic-tac sign

Parallelism

Rosette sign

False negatives



- CT scan

Drugs with different densities



Conclusion

- Awareness about body packing syndrome
- Consider body packing in suspected situations like prisons

Thank You

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