

FORENSIC RESEARCH PROJECT

RESEARCH PROJECT

Title	: Forensic and epidemiological analysis of decomposed bodies in Catalonia
Keywords	: taphonomy, postmortem interval, forensic anthropology
Forensic Expertise Area	: Forensic Anthropology
Department	: Pathology Service
Institute/Company	: Institute Legal Medicine and Forensic Science of Catalonia
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SHORT DESCRIPTION

Estimating time since death is one of the largest and most common problems that forensic pathologists have to face. The uncertainty regarding calculation of postmortem interval (PMI) increases considerably when destructive processes advance. Numerous factors have been identified as being responsible for the postmortem change in the cadaver; classified into intrinsic and post-mortem environmental factors of the cadaver (temperature, humidity, insect activity, foraging animals).

Research question:

This study aims to develop a putrefaction map of Catalonia and to analyse the role of the different variables involved during putrefaction of the corpse. Specifically, we aim to evaluate the characteristic features of cases where decomposition had occurred, to review pre-disposing factors, and also to examine the diagnostic yield for cause and manner of death.

Methodology:

- Medicolegal autopsies
- Forensic autopsy reports
- Laboratory data

REQUIRED/RECOMMENDED EXPERTISE

For this project, it is essential that the student has some basic knowledge of Spanish, since it will involve reading medicolegal reports.

REFERENCES

Byard R, Farrell E, Simpson E. Diagnostic yield and characteristic features in a series of decomposed bodies subject to coronial autopsy. *Forensic Sci Med Pathol* (2008) 4:9–14.

Honigschnabl S, Schaden E, Stichenwirth M, Schneider B, Klupp N, Kremeier E, et al. Discovery of decomposed and mummified corpses in the domestic setting—a marker of social isolation? *J Forensic Sci* (2002) 47:837–42.