



CASE STUDY # 16

Death Claim of an alleged Snake Bite

This is a case of death claim of a 34 years of male due alleged snake bite. We were asked to opine whether the insured died because of snake bite or some other poison.

The death of the insured occurred within one hour of alleged bite and post-mortem was done. But blood samples, samples of the viscera like solid organs kidney, liver, spleen and skin around the suspected bite marks were not preserved for chemical analysis.

The medical officer clearly mentioned in the post-mortem report that "in my opinion mode death is cardiopulmonary and cause of death is poisonous snake bite", but it is just an opinion. There was no snake examined. No chemical analysis showing the presence of snake venom was done. Further the conclusion of cardiopulmonary is clinical and may be so declared by treating doctor. It is not diagnosis at post-mortem stage. The opinion is just a speculation. The post-mortem report also mentions "Cause is clear by appearance". Appearance was only of 2 bite marks which could have been any animal.

In case of death due to snake bite it is of immense importance for the forensic experts to detect and quantify the snake venom residue in autopsy specimens of snake-bite victims to ascertain the exact cause of death and to prevent false claims. But in this case no chemical analysis was done on viscera, blood and piece of skin was not obtained from around the alleged bite marks. It is not established that the insured did die due to either a snake bite or due to any other poison.

Thus, the death was not proven to be due to snake bite.

For details, drop in a mail to info@inchesgroup.com