

F R E N S I C T E A M

LEDARES 431



Hadeel AL-Saif & Abdulrahman Al-Shaya

Death Certification

DONE BY:

Amjad Alshehri & Khaled Alshehri

Slides ■ Doctors notes ■ Additional

CRIME SCENE DO NOT CROSS CRIME

Definitions Of Death Certificate:

- *Permanent record of an individual's death.
- *The final certification of a patient's life and cause of death.
- *The legal and nationally accepted confirmation of death.
- *An important tool in epidemiological database.
- *Should be accurate and with complete information by physicians are mandatory.

The Benefits of death document include:

- *The proof of legal death.
- *Health care insurance claims.
- *In epidemiologic statistics providing public health program and clinical medical research programs.
- *it is widely used by the national health authorities to screen, evaluate and monitor the public health by calculating the mortality rates of the targeted population.



- *it is an essential indicator for planning and prioritizing the preventive services and health needs of the nation.

***correct death certificates play a vital role in clinical studies.**

***After pronouncing death, the certifying physician must ensure the accurate documentation at a number of steps involved in the certification process.**

"Unfortunately, death certification errors are very common by physicians" 😞😞😞

***Another study reviewing the accuracy of death certificates on an intensive care unit (ICU) reported that there was a noticeable difference regarding the primary cause of death between the consultant intensives and the assessing pathologist.**

***a Swedish study pointed out that their death certificates are highly accurate they could be used in future surveillance studies to screen for diseases such as prostate cancer without dreading erroneous rates and subsequent ramifications.**

***The results of a study conducted on medical students from the Fiji School of Medicine to determine the efficacy and accessibility of the certification module**

of the WHO's newly-developed web based training tool for coders and certifiers of deaths showed that there is improvement in accurate completion of death certificates.

This positive response encourages the implementation of this tool in the curriculum for medical students.

*** A local study carried out in KKUH and KFNGH in 2008 reviewed 157 death reports and showed the following outcomes: The primary cause of death was consistent in both death reports and medical files of the deceased in only 14% of the cases whereas 80.3% of the cases showed mismatch. In comparison, there was no agreement in the secondary cause of death between the death reports and files in 52.8% of the cases while only 26.1% of the cases matched.**

***Complete and accurate documentation of the immediate, underlying and contributory causes of death of the decedent on the death certificate is a requirement to produce standardized statistical information and to the ability to produce cause-specific mortality statistics, and that has been recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO).**



*** Notes from the book:**

1-The format for certifying the cause of death is

Now defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) and is an international standard that is used in most countries:

2-Some jurisdictions will allow specific causes of death that would not be acceptable elsewhere. In the UK it is acceptable in certain situations, i.e. if the .’patient is over 80 years of age, to record ‘1a: Old age At the other end of the age range, the diagnosis of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is now well established; unfortunately, the diagnostic criteria are seldom as well known and even less frequently are they applied to the letter.

3- the reliability of the information contained within the death certificate depends wholly on the integrity and competency of the certifying doctor.

4- International Classification of Disease are now well established and the WHO produced a book, international statistical classification of diseases and Related health problems (ICD) , which can be used for both clinical diagnosis and death certificates. In this classification, each condition is given a four-digit ICD code, which simplifies both data recording and data analysis and allows information from many national and international sources to be compared. In some countries, doctors also have to record the manner of death (e.g.: homicide, suicide) on the death certificate.

***reference:
simpson's forensic medicine book**

The proper certification of cause and manner of death is important for a variety of legal and practical reasons. Death certificates serve as a source of statistical data from which information about the health status of populations is developed. The cause of death should convey an understanding of what natural disease process, injury, event, or combination thereof led to an individual's death. Natural disease and injury are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The cause of death statement need not be overly specific, but does need to allow one to gain a good understanding of why the individual died. The importance of clear, objective, accurate, consistent, and proper wording of the cause of death cannot be overemphasized. The cause of death should be worded such that there is a minimal chance of misinterpretation or confusion. Verbose, unclear, or nonspecific wording may lead to unintended legal, judgmental, prosecutorial, or political statements.¹ Although most deaths are from natural causes, if any amount of traumatic injury, drug toxicity, or other nonnatural event is deemed significant enough to be a factor in a person's demise, then the manner of death is nonnatural. All nonnatural deaths should be reported to the medical examiner. It has been said that

"death in all its forms and guises is the challenge of the forensic medical examiner."

**Proper death certification begins with a fundamental understanding of cause and manner of death. The cause of death is the injury, disease, or combination of the two that initiates a train of physiological disturbances that, no matter how brief or prolonged, resulted in the fatal termination of an individual's life.*

Reference: forensic pathology book. Chapter 30 page 687.

MCQs:

Q1 - The legal and nationally accepted confirmation of death is the definition of:

- A- Death Certificate.
- B- Postmortem Examination.
- C- Cause of Death.
- D- Autopsy Report.

Q2 - All of the followings belong to death certificate except:

- A- a permanent record of an individual's death.
- B- the final certification of a patient life and cause of death.
- C- the determination of an individual, weather dead or alive, using certain physical characteristics
- D- the legal and nationally accepted confirmation of death

Q3 - Which of the following is the most important and accurate epidemiological tool?

- A- Death certificate.
- B- Postmortem examination.
- C- Manner of death.
- D- Medical records.

Q4 - In the death certificate you must mention:

- A- The deceased financial statement.
- B- Manner of death.
- C- First job.
- D- His/her usual breakfast.

A - C - A - B