

## Letter to Editor

# Humanitarian Forensics: Perspective to Dignified Management of Dead Body

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## Abstract

Humanitarian forensic deals with application of knowledge and skills of forensic medicine subject for humanitarian action, usually in relation to dignified management of dead as many of the times this part is neglected. Post-mortem examination of dead body is very crucial part of forensic pathology to deliver justice. Forensic Medicine or Forensic Pathology doctors are involved in autopsy of dead since long but humanitarian approach to meet dignified management of corpse is not only involve autopsy surgeons but also involve treating doctors, nurses, hospital paramedics, attendants, mortuary attendants, police, media, relatives of the deceased etc. whosoever comes in contact with dead person. Practicing humanitarian forensic is the need of an hour which require in depth training of health care workers as well as mobilization of resources as per the need of time along with support from government and various organization. Good faith and intention, willingness to work, providing quality care and support are key factors for practicing humanitarian forensics.

## Key words

Humanitarian, Forensic, Dead body, Management, Forensic Pathology, Forensic Medicine.

## Introduction

Forensic medicine deals with application of knowledge of medical and paramedical for better administration of justice in the court of law. Forensic Pathology is the subject which deals with post-mortem examination of human body to

help justice in the court of law [1]. Humanitarian forensic deals with application of knowledge and skills of forensic medicine subject for humanitarian action, usually in relation to dignified management of dead as many of the times this part is neglected. Post-mortem examination of dead body is very crucial part of

forensic pathology to deliver justice. Forensic Medicine or Forensic Pathology doctors are involved in autopsy of dead since long but humanitarian approach to meet dignified management of corpse is not only involve autopsy surgeons but also involve treating doctors, nurses [2], hospital paramedics, attendants, mortuary attendants, police, media, relatives of the deceased etc. whosoever comes in contact with dead person.

Forensic can be applied for day to day life towards betterment of quality of leaving. Touch of forensic is present in various branches like forensic medicine, forensic pathology, forensic entomology, forensic serology, forensic chemistry, forensic nursing, forensic anthropology, forensic osteology, forensic biology, forensic DNA typing, forensic thanatology, forensic trichology, forensic onychology [3], forensic histopathology, etc. Above all can be a part of wide spectrum terminology of humanitarian forensics when they are applied to serve human beings.

Most of the times, people are not aware of forensic or they have myth and false conception regarding the activities and purpose of forensic. Many times, general population is not aware of advancements and facilities available to them via forensic aspect of daily life. Forensic is hand to hand practice of judiciary like lawyers, investigative agencies like police department and doctors like forensic experts. Humanitarian forensics is not only restricted to dignified management of dead but it can also deal with victims of any crime [4].

During natural or man-made calamity or disaster or even in a pandemic such as the COVID-19 outbreak, management of the dead across the world is challenge to be addressed in proper manner starting from identification of person up to proper disposal of corpse. Who is supposed to handle the bodies, How to handle dead body, identification of deceased [5], autopsy should be done or not, which precautions need to be taken during autopsy, how can authorities ensure the

safety of those handling the bodies and how should people carry out last rites of the deceased without risking others and spreading contamination, how to ensure safety and safeguard of general public — these are issues which need to be addressed and required as much attention as the containment of the disease itself. With proper preparation and planning, we can ensure the safety of healthcare workers as well as the dignity of the deceased.

Proper guidelines from competent authorities from time to time are required. Awareness program for doctors, healthcare workers and relatives are needed to educate them. Media, advertisement and awareness campaign can help to enhance safety of living as well as dignified management of deceased. Educational training programs like CME, workshop, conference, seminars, etc. need to be arranged to spread the knowledge among doctors, residents and interns. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), World Health Organization (WHO), Health Department of various countries and states are usually actively involving in framing guidelines and policies to guide health workers and encouraging programs to ensure various organizations can help the growing needs globally concerning the dead, their families, and those working to manage the dead. The ICRC encourages authorities and forensic institutions to incorporate these recommendations and resources into their work practices as a part of their COVID-19 planning and response [5, 6].

## **Conclusion**

Practicing humanitarian forensic is the need of an hour which require in depth training of health care workers as well as mobilization of resources as per the need of time along with support from government and various organization. Good faith and intention, willingness to work, providing quality care and support are key factors for practicing humanitarian forensics.

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