Credible Autopsy Report for Investigators and Judiciary

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Abstract: Introduction: When a forensic doctor determines that a suspicious death is a suicide, homicide, or accident, the decision virtually becomes incontestable by the investigating police officer, and it becomes an issue whether the medical opinion was created with necessary checks and balances on the other probabilities of the case. It is suggested that the opinion of Forensic Medical experts is conventional, mutable, and shifting from one expert to another. The determination of suicide, accident, or homicide is mandatorily required, which is the Gold Standard for conducting death investigations. Forensic investigations serve many audiences, but the court is by far the most critical. The likely questions on direct and cross-examination determine how forensic doctors gather and handle evidence and what conclusions they reach. Methodology: The author interacted with the investigative authority, and a crime scene visit was also done along with the perusal of the Postmortem report, subsequent opinion, and crime scene photographs and statements of the witness and accused. Further analysis of all relevant scientific documents and opinions of other forensic doctors, forensic scientists, and ballistic experts involved in these cases was done to arrive at an opinion with scientific justification. Findings: The opinions arrived at by the author and how they helped the judiciary in delivering justice in these cases have been discussed in this article. This can help the readers to understand the process involved in formulating a credible forensic medical expert opinion for investigators and the judiciary. Conclusion: A criminal case might be won or lost over doubt cast on the chain of custody. Medically trained forensic doctors, therefore, learn to practice their profession in legally appropriate ways, and opinions must be based on medical justifications with credible references.

Keywords: forensic doctor, professional credibility, investigation, expert opinion

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