

The autopsy-based way of assessing SUD in Denmark – The entry for a multidisciplinary based synergy.

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Introduction Cases of sudden unexpected death (SUD) occur in all age groups. The cause of death is often assumed since medical autopsies are rarely performed, and the police often do not have an investigative interest in performing forensic autopsies. Due to a change in health legislation regarding hospital health care services and forensic societal service in Denmark, we have succeeded to establish and offer a standardized examination of all SUD cases with the purpose of stating the cause of death and in relevant cases to secure follow-up for the family.

Material and methods Since mid-2021 clinicians can request an autopsy in SUD cases with a suspected inherited cause at the forensic institutes. Relevant clinical information and family history is provided. Prior to autopsy post-mortem CT, possibly MRI is performed. Standardized full autopsies are performed. Supplementary analyses include histopathology, forensic toxicology, microbiology and genetic analyses.

Results The autopsy report and supplementary analyses results are sent to inherited disease clinics who manage clinical follow-up of the family including necessary genetic screening. The clinical representatives and forensic institutes author a yearly report and organize regional and national conferences.

Discussion Multidisciplinary collaboration resulted in a legislative change enabling the performance of autopsies at forensic institutes in SUD cases with suspected inherited cause. This secures standardized examination of SUD cases and supplies invaluable information for health registries, clinical specialties and family.

This abstract should be assessed together with the abstract from Professor Jacob Tfelt for the results and importance of the follow up.