

great pity. The Home Office do not understand such cases, and I think we ought to work so that these men would not be thus bandied about. It is most important that young workers should take up these matters and induce wholesome changes. The amount stolen by that type of criminal was trifling, and it is hardly fair to them to depict them in terrible colours. In one sense many of them are taught to be criminals and are therefore to be sympathised with. I thank you for the opportunity of being here. It is a great privilege, for I like to identify myself with the work going on in our various asylums.

Statistics Relating to the Disappearance of Rigor Mortis.
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Of 220 cases in which post-mortem examinations were held the following were the conditions as to rigor mortis. It will be seen that in only 11 cases does the condition recorded militate in any way against the statement that "far from commencing in the jaw, then attacking the arms and lastly the legs, and disappearing in the inverse order," as was at one time taught, and as is stated at the present time in some of our text-books, in whatever order it may commence, it almost invariably disappears first from the jaw, afterwards from the arms and legs; in fact probably in the order of its appearance.

Absent in all extremities	...	...	...	33
Present in all extremities	...	...	...	65
Absent jaw, disappears arms, present legs	...	...	...	25
Absent jaw, present arms and legs	...	...	...	12
Absent jaw, disappears arms and legs	...	...	...	3
Absent jaw and arms, present legs	...	...	...	2
Absent jaw and arms, disappears legs	...	...	...	4
Absent arms, present legs	...	...	...	26
Absent arms, disappears legs	...	...	...	7
Disappears arms, present legs	...	...	...	15
				192
Present arms, disappears legs	...	...	...	1
Slightly present arms, absent legs	...	...	...	1
Present jaw and arms, absent legs	...	...	...	1
Present jaw, disappears arms and legs	...	...	...	3
Present jaw and legs, disappears arms	...	...	...	2
Present jaw and legs	...	...	...	1
Disappears arms, absent jaw and legs	...	...	...	1
Absent jaw and legs	...	...	...	1
				11
Not noted	...	...	...	17

If we analyse the 11 cases in which the order of disappearance is at variance with that occurring in the far larger number, we find that they are not to be regarded as reliable, either from the absence of negative as well as positive evidence, the possible careless handling of the cadaver previous to examination, or indefinitely expressed statements.

With regard to the time of total disappearance of the rigor, the following facts were elicited from the same cases:—

In 33 it was absent altogether, the earliest recorded time after death being $17\frac{1}{2}$ hours, but as this happened in a case of advanced heart disease, with very extensive œdema of all parts, the rigor was probably never perceptible at all, owing to the sodden condition of the tissues.

The next was in one 20 hours after death, the patient having died of general paralysis.

Then in one 24 hours after death from phthisis.

Of all 33 cases in which it was absent 15 had died from phthisis, four of general paralysis, the remaining cases being spread amongst various diseases, from which it would appear that in those dying of phthisis, post-mortem rigor is peculiarly prone to disappear early, probably owing to the exhausting nature of the disease.

Twenty-one of the cases were examined 50 or more hours after death. Of these rigor mortis was present in some part in 11. The longest time after death at which it was present was 60 hours, death being due to nephritis; and there were several in which it occurred 56, 57, and 58 hours after death.

From the above facts it appears that although in exceptional cases the death rigor may disappear as early as the twentieth hour, it may be, and probably often is present 60 hours after death.

Discussion.

Dr. MACDONALD referred to a case in general hospital practice where, nine hours after death, there was no rigor mortis. He asked Dr. Blachford what was the earliest time he had observed rigor mortis to disappear?

In reply, Dr. BLACHFORD said that his records showed $17\frac{1}{2}$ hours and 21 hours in two cases.