

Unit 1.3

Preface

In the previous lessons, students were introduced to the case of the mysterious death of a woman named Anna Garcia. They investigated the crime scene, analyzed the evidence, and performed DNA profiling. When a mysterious death occurs, an autopsy is required. Therefore, an autopsy is required for Anna. In this lesson students will investigate autopsy procedures and will be given the first piece of Anna's autopsy report. They will put together all of the evidence collected and analyzed regarding Anna's mysterious death throughout the unit in order to draw conclusions and create a report detailing the suspected manner of death (natural, accident, or homicide). They will learn how to properly cite sources and investigate the role that different biomedical professionals played in Anna's mysterious death investigation. Finally they will also discuss the bioethics of scientific research and explore the bounds of HIPAA legislation.

Understandings

1. The purpose of an autopsy is to answer any questions about the illness, cause of death, and/or any co-existing conditions.
2. Determining the manner of death involves the investigation of many aspects, including the medical condition of the victim, the internal and external examination of the body, the chemical and microscopic analysis of tissues and body fluids, and the analysis of all evidence found at the scene.
3. A comprehensive set of standards and practices is necessary in order to give patients specific rights regarding their personal health information.

Knowledge and Skills

It is expected that students will:

- Describe how an autopsy is performed and the types of information it provides to officials regarding the manner and cause of death.
- Recognize that a variety of biomedical science professionals are involved in crime scene analysis and determination of manner of death in mysterious death cases.
- Interpret information from an autopsy report to predict the manner of death.

- Explain the importance of confidentiality when dealing with patients, and describe the major patient protections written into the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
- Analyze patient confidentiality scenarios.

Essential Questions

1. What is an autopsy and how can it be used to determine the cause of death?
2. How can the manner of death be determined?
3. Why is confidentiality of patient information important?
4. Who should keep patient information confidential?
5. Is there ever a time when patient confidentiality should be broken?
6. What biomedical science professionals are involved in crime scene analysis and determination of manner of death?