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A HUSBAND CUT HIS AILING WIFE'S THROAT IN 'ACT OF LOVE': FIRST REPORTED CASE IN SRI LANKA

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INTRODUCTION

Infliction of painless death in a patient suffering from severe pain or distress due to incurable terminal illness by another person called as mercy killing or euthanasia. If this happened in a hospital with the consent in a country where euthanasia is legalized there is nothing to be discussed. Absence of deceased account related to the incident and the so-called history of "mercy killing" opens up much discussion.

CASE REPORT

A 63-year-old married woman was found dead with a cut injury from which bled a lot onto her bed in an early morning with a sharp knife at the scene. History revealed that she had sustained cervical spinal cord injury upon accidental fall around 5 months ago confining her to bed with quadriplegia and much pain. The pain and the hardships that she was facing were too distressing and were unbearable to the husband who loved the wife very much. The husband had planned himself to get suicide after killing his wife with the pure intention of ending of her suffering. As a result husband slashed her neck with a sharp knife. There after he tried to commit suicide with cut throat and hanging but both methods were failed. At the autopsy, the clothes showed flashed blood on the upper part of the blouse [Fig-1]. A deep, horizontally placed, incised neck injury was found on the front and right side of middle third of the neck [Fig-2]. Death was opined as due to exsanguinous bleeding resulting from deep cut of the neck produced by a sharp weapon. Upon the medico-legal examination of the alleged husband with superficial cut injuries at the neck and head and a ligature mark, confessed that he killed her wife solely because of the incurable suffering.

CONCLUSION

The important fact here to be considered is the intention of the alleged assailant. i.e. actual case of mercy killing, or a malicious act or he was insane, depressed, etc. Among many other facts this case highlights the consideration of the law related to euthanasia in Sri Lanka along with insurance schemes and counseling schemes.