

**Forensic Science****Students need to read, complete the questions on a separate sheet.****MULTIPLE STAB WOUNDS****Case History**

Police in a rural county arrested a suspicious motorist for a traffic violation. The car was registered to a woman in a distant city, and local police were contacted to check with the owner. They could not get an answer at her door. Neighbors said they had not seen her for several days. Upon entering the residence through an unlocked second floor window, they found the owner, a 39-year old barmaid, dead on a bed in a first floor bedroom. She was nude and covered by a blanket.

An autopsy was performed the next day. There was moderate decomposition with abdominal and facial bloating, subcutaneous emphysema, marbling, and skin slippage.

There were five stab wounds and three incised wounds of the anterior and left lateral neck. The stab wounds were clustered below the left ear and ranged from 0.5 inches to 0.87 inches long. Because of the decomposition, the individual knife tracks could not be followed. The wounds collectively, however, appeared to extend down to the cervical spine. There were palpable fractures of the fourth and sixth cervical vertebrae. There were five deep stab wounds of the anterior chest and abdomen ranging from 0.63 inches to 1.0 inch long. One of the stab wounds of the anterior chest penetrated the right ventricle of the heart.

**In** addition to the five deep stab wounds of the anterior chest and abdomen, there were three superficial wounds. Each consisted of a roughly 0.63-inches by 0.13-inches rectangular abrasion. At one end of each abrasion was a superficial 0.13-inches stab wound that penetrated only the skin.

**Study Questions**

What is the cause of the superficial stab wounds/ abrasions of the anterior chest and abdomen?

2. What further postmortem studies should be conducted?

C  
A  
S  
E

S  
T  
U  
D  
Y