



Case #122

NAME Educational Activities Committee

Case provided by:

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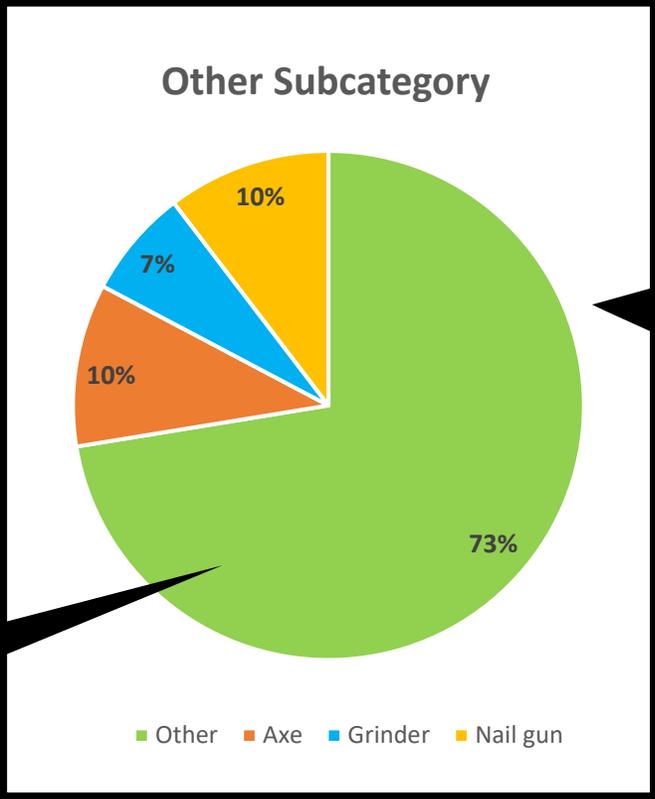
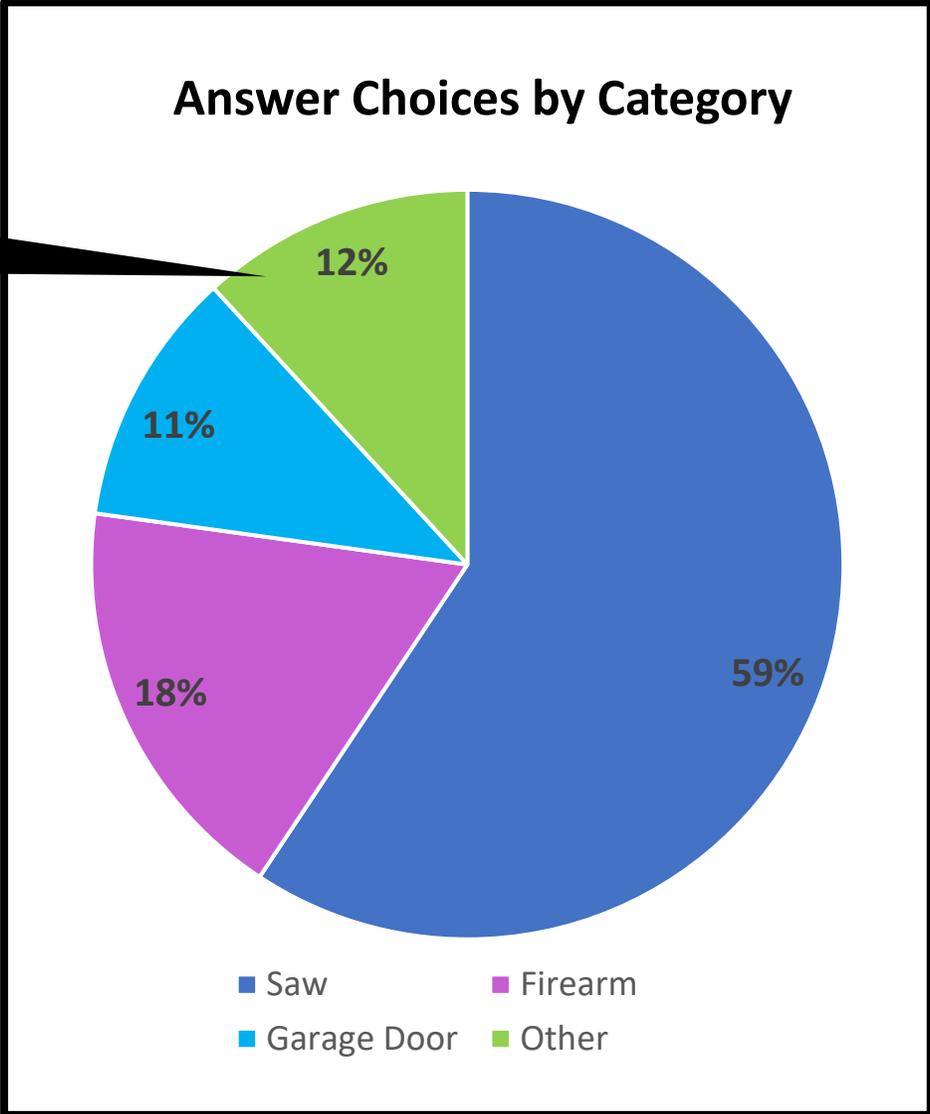
1. A 68-year-old white man had a history of colon cancer for one year. Since his diagnosis, his family reported he had increasing suicidal ideation and threats, including attempting suicide with a firearm. During this attempt, the firearm jammed preventing injury, and following this incident his suicidal ideations seemed improved. Recently, he was reportedly been experiencing increasing paranoia and hearing voices. On the day of his death, he left the residence to do work in his garage. His wife found him with the garage door partially open, lying in a pool of blood, with a visible injury to his neck.

What object caused the depicted injury?

FREE TEXT ANSWER!

Word Cloud

reciprocating Tangential shotgun
Circular saw wound Electric
GSW Chain saw garage door
gun Table saw saw injury Firearm
Axe Shotgun Chainsaw Serrated
Power sawblade power tool
angle grinder hedge trimmer Garage door spring



- Including:
- Blunt force trauma
 - Air compressor
 - Baseball bat
 - High voltage electrocution
 - Shovel

Answer...

Chainsaw (59% of responses listed some sort of saw, 20% mentioned chainsaw specifically)

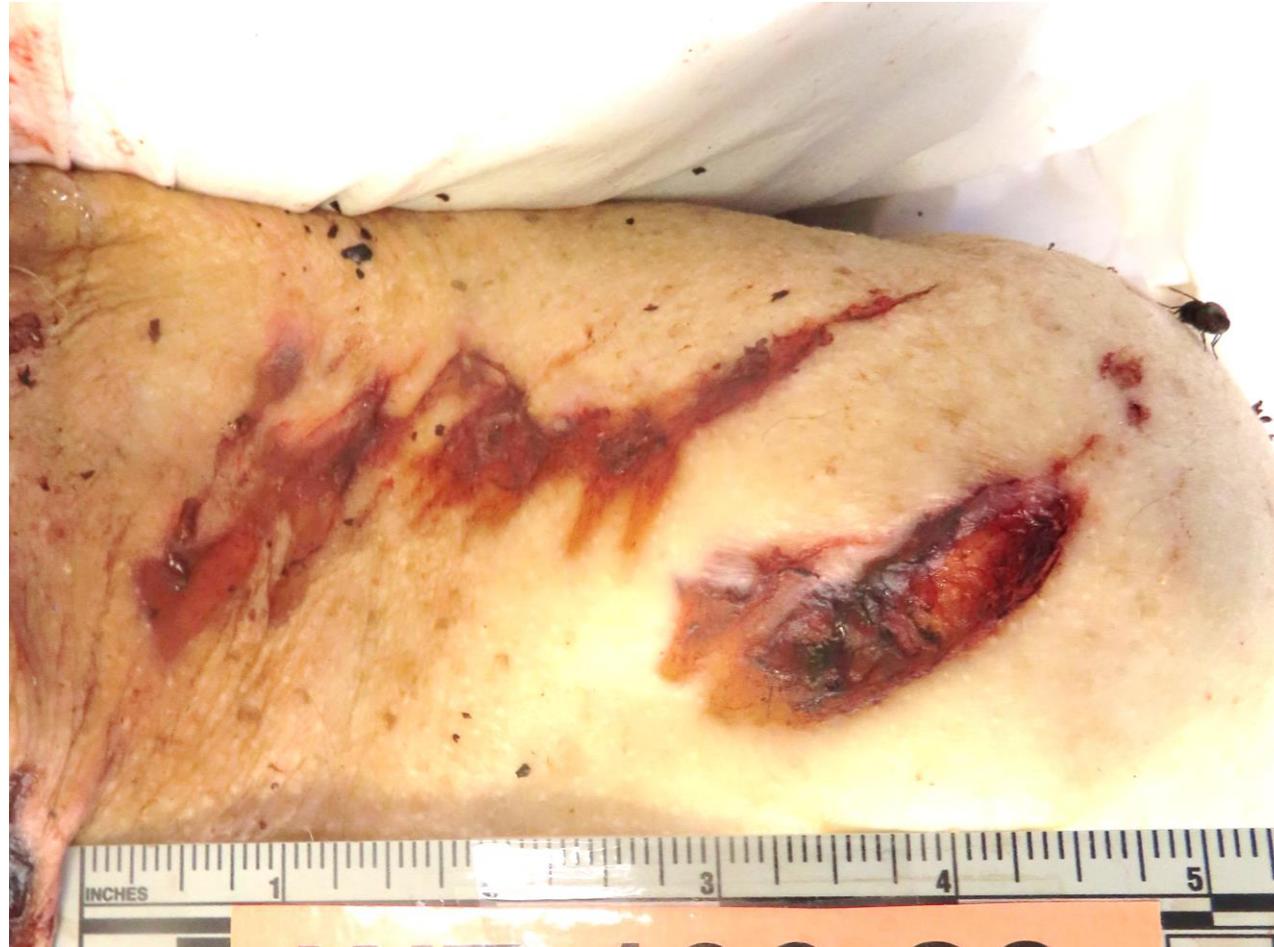
Chainsaw suicides are rare events, occurring much less frequently than the more common methods of firearms, hanging/asphyxiation and poisoning (Stojanovic, 2012). Due to the unusual method of injury, care must be taken to fully investigate the scene, body and review the decedent's history to determine manner of death.

Chainsaws operate by two plates of "teeth" (side and top) that are arranged in a chain, which is rotated around a base by electric, petrol or battery power (Moreschi, 2014). They are designed primarily to cut wood and the teeth work together to cut and remove the wood in chips. Due to the saw not consisting of a single blade, the wounds produced are often straight but with side wall tags and often contused and irregular edges. There may be embedded particles of foreign material (wood chips or sawdust, grease, oil, tree bark) from the saw blades. There may be secondary parallel cuts, sometimes distant from the main wound and less deep from "kickback" of the saw (rather than hesitation marks). The mechanical vibrations produced by a chainsaw can also cause damage and there have been reports of compound fractures of the cervical vertebrae or basal skull structures related to these mechanical pressure waves. Most chainsaw suicides involve injury to the neck, and death usually occurs rapidly due to severe damage to the underlying muscle, bone and vasculature (Gualco, 2022). Chainsaw suicides are also less likely to have "hesitation marks" than other sharp force suicides.

Chainsaw cont'd (59% of responses listed some sort of saw, 20% mentioned chainsaw specifically)

Scene investigation is critical as the chainsaw would typically be found near (and sometimes under) the decedent and there is often significant blood spatter in addition to pooling of blood. In the presented case, an electric chainsaw was found next to the decedent. Lack of a weapon on scene should prompt further investigation for possible altering of the scene by family or first responders or for inflicted homicidal trauma (Ferne, 1994). Chainsaw suicides would be less likely to have injuries to the hands or forearms, that might be expected in homicides from defensive wounds.

“Kickback” injuries on shoulder of another decedent who completed suicide with chainsaw



Honorable mentions

“Implement causing blunt force and sharp force trauma including consistently spaced linear injuries on the edge of the wound. **A large zombie knife crossed with an axe?**”



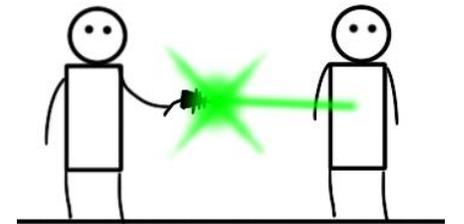
Image courtesy of Google Gemini AI (LOL)

“Elon Musk's chainsaw”

... and whoever
accidentally sent me their
phone number

██████████ 2020”

“Death ray gun”



<https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/DeathRay>

REFERENCES

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3. Gualco, B., Angelino, A., Rensi, R., Manetti, G., and Focardi, M. "An unusual complex suicide involving a chainsaw and a hanging." *Journal of Medical Case Reports (2002)* 16:122. doi: 10.1186/s13256-022-03344-4.
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