

Drag Racing Turns Fatal- A Case Report

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Abstract

Drag racing is a type of motor racing in which automobiles or motorcycles (usually specially prepared for the purpose) compete, usually two at a time, to be first to cross a set finish line. Drag racing has existed in both street racing and regulated motorsport forms since automobiles and motorcycles were developed. Few youth in Bangalore resort to street racing form at nights in peripheral ring road, which is illegal.

Here, we are presenting a case of a 19yr old boy, who died at a drag race finishing line. The present case emphasizes the need for regulating drag racing in India and to form strict guidelines for the same.

Keywords: Drag racing, traumatic ruptures of heart, motor sport.

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Introduction

Drag racing is a barest form of racing, testing the limit of the machine as well as the resolve and presence of mind of the driver. Any true motorsport enthusiast would have tried it at least once in his life, be it with friends during college or "unofficially" from one traffic signal to another. It is the purest and most exciting form of racing as it involves simple rules (1). Organized drag racing is rapidly growing in India. Autocar India organized the country's first drag race meet in Mumbai in 2002 (2).

Case details

On 17/06/2014, a 19 year old boy was brought to the Emergency Department, Manipal hospital, Bengaluru, by his friends around 5am and was declared brought dead. On investigation, the police found that the deceased got injured during drag race which was organised illegally at Marathahalli ring road, Bengaluru at around 4 AM. Such illegal racing was going on since few months in early hours as there will be no police at that time. The case was referred to post-mortem examination in Department of Forensic Medicine & Toxicology, Bowring and

Lady Curzon Hospital, attached to Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute, Bengaluru.

Autopsy findings

External Findings: The body measured 174 cm in length. Rigor mortis was appreciated all over the body. Faint post-mortem staining was present over the back of the body and fixed. The only external injury which was present was an oval shaped imprint abrasion over middle of front of chest measuring 14cm x 10cm (Fig 1).



Fig 1: Imprint Abrasion over chest



Fig 2: Fracture of Sternum

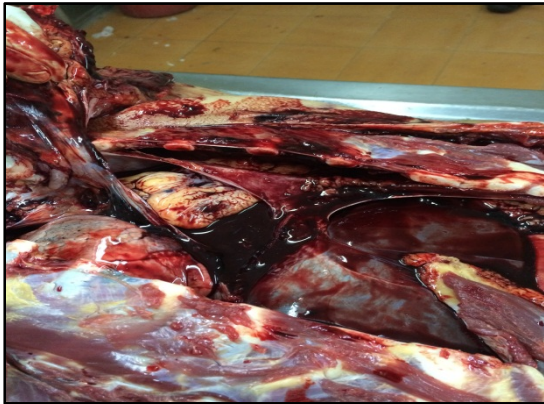


Fig 3: Haemopericardium



Fig 4: Heart ruptured at two places.

Internal findings: Internally, the sternum was fractured horizontally at the junction of 3rd and 4th ribs (Fig 2). Haemopericardium was noted in the pericardial sac (Fig 3). Heart was ruptured at 2 places, one at the apex and the other at the left atrium (Fig 4). All the other organs were pale.

Cause of Death: It was opined that, Death was due to cardiac tamponade as a result of rupture of heart consequent upon injury sustained to the chest.



Fig 5: Mirror of the vehicle.



Fig 6: Corresponding injury over chest.

Discussion

The deceased was riding a high end bike (Duke 390cc) in a good condition with efficient braking system. He was wearing an ISI standard full helmet. The only external injury which he sustained over the chest was from the mirror (Fig 5) of the vehicle which corresponds exactly to the injury sustained (Fig 6).

This particular case was booked under Section 174 CrPC as unnatural death, as a case of self-accident

and closed within a short period. The responsibility of Bengaluru City Police was restricted to:

1. Stopping such races when they get information about the drag race.
2. Charging the people who put bets for illegal betting as per Karnataka Gambling Act 1960 where a meagre fine is put.
3. The riders can be charged with a fine of ₹100 to 400 for over speeding for first instance and up to ₹1000 for second instance. (CMV Act 183 of 1988)
4. Section 184 of CMV Act: Dangerous Driving: ₹ 1000- 2000 fine OR 6 months to 2 years imprisonment.
5. Section 19 & 20 of CMV Act: Disqualifying Driving License(3),(4),(5).

Drag racers usually are out between midnight and 3 AM and the police find it tough to apprehend them. This adrenalin-filled activity, which the police term as dangerous and reckless, is continuing even after the police clampdown, particularly after the fatal shooting by an army sentry of 19-year-old drag racer Mr. X on December 28. Mr. X, who was trying to escape from the police, trespassed into the official quarters of Brigadier Mr. Y, Commandant, Karnataka and Kerala Sub Area, on Airport Road. In March 2006, Mr. Z, Sub-Inspector of Police on duty was killed after he was knocked down by a racer on Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bengaluru (6).

The Observer's study by Jim Downing (7) concluded that, "racing deaths aren't as rare as the racing world believes and that patterns were evident that might save lives." Drag strip deaths provides information about drag racers who died while racing on a drag strip or at the wheel of a drag race vehicle specifically constructed for racing on a drag strip.

Over 400 drag race drivers who died while racing have been identified (8).

Conclusion

Illegal drag racing is a criminal offence in India. Hence, strict police vigilance at long stretches of good roads can prevent such incidents. We need to recommend the Government to formulate and implement strict laws regarding motor sports to prevent such fatalities in the future

Conflict of interest

None

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