Murder or accidental drowning in a bathtub? Case studies of drowning and non-aquatic homicides staged as bathtub drowning accidents and suicides.

Christina Elliot, B.A., \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ MD; Andrea Zaferes\*, B.A., Dutchess County Medical Examiner / RIPTIDE, POB 601, Shokan, NY 12481;

After attending this session attendees will be able to better recognize signs of foul play specific to several different types of aquatic child homicides and injuries committed by their caregivers that are then staged as bathtub drowning accidents, land-based apparent-life-threatening events or illness.

This presentation will impact the forensic and medical communities by providing an increased awareness of these types of aquatic crimes against children (ACAC) with the goal of facilitating early recognition of red flags, more effective investigations and successful, justified prosecutions.

In 2016 drowning was the most common “unintentional’ cause of death for infants in the U.S. and \_\_\_\_ for older children. A number of these deaths are not unintentional. Several of our case histories were deaths originally diagnosed with accident manner of death and later changed to homicide when investigations were re-opened and homicide convictions resulted. It is likely that other ACAC are being missed due to the lack of training regarding ACAC on the parts of law enforcement, death investigators, medical personnel, and prosecutors, and the lack of aquatic variables included on investigative tools such as the CDC SUIDS form.

Case histories of ACAC were organized into six main categories, namely, punishment, homicide, birthing incidents, Munchausen by proxy, aquatic sexual sadism, and pedophilia. Some of the categories are divided into subcategories. For example, the homicide category includes homicides on land staged as accidental drowning, murder-suicide, and homicidal drowning staged as land-based accident or natural manner of death subcategories.

Crimes against children are often perpetrated by caregivers who have primary or temporary responsibility for their victims, and thus we will focus on ACAC involving caregiver offenders. The categorizing of these ACAC is useful as it facilitates increased awareness and recognition of ACAC by investigators and medical personnel, and provides specific investigative techniques and further areas of research.

The cases studies presented in this paper represent several different types of ACAC of which the forensic and medical communities needs to be made aware.

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\*Presenting author

Anyone who the child lives with, who has primary respnsiblity for the child – nonfamily relative member such as a close neighbor who has taken on responsibility for the child. Live with extended family. Older siblings can be legal caregivers if over 18 years old. Who is taking care of the child for any given momment. Legal caregivers are responsible for the overall care of the child such as providing food, housing, medical

Child abuse and neglect laws