

FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY

GLOSSARY

Algor mortis

: the postmortem cooling of the body

Ante mortem

: latin for "before death." Refers to injuries or events that occurred during life, such as healed fractures, infections, or nutritional deficiencies, that are capable of causing disease

Anthropology

: the science of the development and culture of human beings. In forensics, this mainly involves the analysis and identification of skeletal remains

Asphyxia

: a condition arising when the body is deprived of oxygen, causing unconsciousness or death; suffocation

Back spatter

: blood directed back toward the source of energy or force that caused the spatter; often associated with entrance gunshot wounds

Ballistics

: branch of physics that deals with the flights of projectiles

Biological profile

: a summary of the essential biological information regarding an individual; generally includes estimates of age, sex, stature, and ancestry

Blunt force trauma

: injury caused by a strong force impacting a wide area of bone

Cerebral edema

: the presence of a large amount of water in the spaces of the brain

Cold case

: an unsolved case which is still open but no longer actively investigated

Congenital abnormalities

: structural or functional abnormalities, including metabolic disorders, Down syndrome, and heart defects, which are present at the time of birth

Conjunctiva

: the mucous membrane that covers the front of the eye and lines the inside of the eyelids

Cortex

: the central portion of a hair containing the pigment which gives hair its colour

Cyanosis

: a bluish discoloration of the skin resulting from poor circulation or inadequate oxygenation of the blood

DNA

: deoxyribonucleic acid, a self-replicating material present in nearly all living organisms. It is the carrier of genetic information

Evidence

: any items, documents, and statements that are included in a legal investigation for the jury's or judge's consideration in the determination of an individual's guilt or innocence

Femur

: the thighbone, the longest bone in the body

Hemoglobin

: a red protein responsible for transporting oxygen in the blood of vertebrates

Hemorrhage

: an escape of blood from a ruptured blood vessel

Incisor

: a narrow-edged tooth at the front of the mouth, adapted for cutting

Lacerations

: a deep cut or tear in skin or flesh

Ligature

: an object used to bind or strangle someone

Petechiae

: are pinpoint, round spots that appear on the skin as a result of bleeding under the skin

Pulmonary edema

: an abnormal buildup of fluid in the air sacs of the lungs

Retinal hemorrhage

: abnormal bleeding of the blood vessels in the retina, the membrane in the back of the eye

Rigor mortis

: stiffening of the body after death; a time dependent change that helps determine time of death

Sciatic notch

: the characteristic shape of the part of the hipbone which may indicate the sex of a skeleton

Sclera

: the white outer layer of the eyeball

Spatter

: dispersion of small blood droplets due to the forceful projection of blood

Subarachnoid hemorrhage

: bleeding in the area between the brain and the thin tissues that cover the brain