

Journal Scan

Comparison of Ethanol Concentrations in right cardiac blood and peripheral blood in a series of 30 cases

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to compare ethanol concentrations in right cardiac blood, left cardiac blood and peripheral blood. Samples were taken from a series of 30 medicolegal autopsies. Ethanol was measured by head space GC-FID. In each case, the degree of putrefaction, chest or abdominal injury, and/ or regurgitation of gastric contents into the airways were noted. Our results show that there exists in certain cases a marked increase in ethanol conc. in left cardiac blood compared with rt. cardiac blood and peripheral blood. In these cases, we observed (i) a high conc. of ethanol in the gastric contents and (ii) regurgitation of gastric contents into the airway. The author discuss the post-mortem redistribution mechanisms which could explain these results and stresses the value of sampling right cardiac blood at autopsy.