

CASE REPORT

Exsanguinated to death: A case of death due to wild boar attack

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Abstract

Wild beasts are responsible for a group of potentially lethal injuries, and India being a land of villages, attacks on humans by wild animals are not uncommon in rural India. While death due to a wild boar attack is rare, it is not unusual to encounter such cases. Death occurs if the incident occurred in uninhabited locations, leading to the victim's exsanguination. Due to the circumstances where the body was found and the nature, multiplicity of the injuries on the victim's body, the investigating officer could be misled and suspect it to be a case of homicide. The hallmark of a wild boar attack is the characteristic penetrating injuries on the lower part of the body, however, once the victim falls on the ground, the injury can be present anywhere on the body. This case is reported for the awareness on possible injuries in such unnatural deaths and to discuss the predisposing factors for such attacks.

Keywords

Animal attack; Blunt penetrating injuries; Indian boar attack; Wild boar attack.

Introduction

The ferociousness of the wild boar is legendary and has been documented since ancient times.¹ They have the ability to defend themselves from natural predators aggressively, and this ferocious behavior of wild boar has also been established against the human beings as well, on a variety of occasions.²

A wild boar is a wild pig with a striking resemblance to domestic pig with two canines protruding outward and upward of the lower jaw mainly for attacking or defending purposes. The length of an adult boar can vary from 5 feet 5 inches to 5 feet 10 inches and the height is about 3 feet to 3 feet 5 inches. An adult male can weigh approximately 68-227 kgs while female weighs about 36– 150 kgs. The Indian wild boar- *Sus cristatus* is slightly taller than the European wild boar- *Sus scrofa*. The young ones are usually born between the months of March and May after a four-month gestation period between November to January. Variety of vegetation like corn, tubers, roots, berries etc. form their principal diet; however, they also feed on reptiles, eggs, insects, worms and so on. They are largely nocturnal. They have very poor eyesight, while their sense of hearing and smell are excellent. They are rarely dangerous to people when left alone. When provoked, they are known to defend themselves ferociously and attack the enemy with their strong snout and tusks leading to lethality.³

Case Report

A 45-year-old male left home informing his wife and children that he would collect tubers, around 3PM in the afternoon and assured them to be back by 6PM in the evening. When he didn't return by 10PM a search team was sent for him and they found him in a semiconscious state, in a semi forested abandoned agricultural land which is known to be habited by wild boars and had tracks of wild boar on the ground. He told his by-standers that a wild boar had attacked him approximately around 7:30 PM on his way back home. On being shifted to hospital, he was declared dead on arrival.

A medicolegal autopsy was conducted on the body the next day. The body was that of a middle-aged man with a stature of 178cm and weight of 60kgs. Post mortem lividity was present on the back of the body and was not fixed. Body was cold and stiff. (Kindly note that the body was kept in the cold chamber)

The following injuries were observed on the body:

1. Penetrating lacerated wound measuring 6cm x 4cm pleural cavity deep, lacerating the intercostal muscle, directed inwards and upwards was present on the left side of the chest in the 8th intercostal space along the mid-axillary line. It was present approximately 118cm above the outer aspect of the left heel. (Fig 1)
2. Penetrating lacerated wound measuring 8cm x 1.5cm muscle deep directed downwards was present on the outer aspect of the left thigh, 16cm lower and 12cm outer to left anterior superior iliac spine. (Fig 2)
3. Penetrating lacerated wound measuring 7cm x 4cm muscle deep was present on the outer aspect of the left thigh 19cm lower and 7cm outer to the left anterior superior iliac spine. (Fig 2)
4. Penetrating lacerated wound measuring 10cm x 5cm

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muscle deep was present on the outer aspect of the left thigh 5cm lower and 5cm outer to injury number 2. (Fig 2)

5. Penetrating lacerated wound measuring 18cm x 10cm bone deep was present on the front aspect of the upper one third of the left thigh which was directed downwards and inwards, with transaction of the femoral artery, femoral vein, the tributaries of the femoral vein and the femoral nerve. It was present 92cm above the inner aspect of the heel. (Fig 3 & 4)
6. Reddish coloured multiple grazed abrasions of varying size from 20cm x 15cm to 3cm x 3cm were present on the entire back on an area of 40cm x 30cm.
7. Perforating lacerated wound measuring 15cm x 9cm muscle deep was present on the back aspect of the left upper thigh 20cm lower to the left posterior superior iliac spine and was directed inwards and downwards.
8. Perforating lacerated wound measuring 12cm x 7cm muscle deep was present on the back aspect of the left upper thigh 3cm lower and 2 cm inner to injury number 7, directed upwards and outwards. All the above-mentioned injuries were ante-mortem in nature with injury number 1 and injury number 5 being fatal. None of the injuries were clean cut and injury number 6 appeared to have resulted during the struggle of the victim to survive the attack. The internal organs were pale and left lung had lacerations corresponding to injury number 1 and was collapsed. Rest of the internal examination was unremarkable.



Figure 2: Penetrating lacerated injuries on the left thigh.



Figure 3: Penetrating lacerated wound on the left thigh



Figure 4: Transection of the femoral artery



Figure 1: Penetrating lacerated wound on the left side of the chest.

Discussion

While death due to a wild boar attack is rare, it is not unusual to encounter such cases especially if the incident has taken place in uninhabited location leading to the exsanguination and untimely death of the victim.

In the present case except injury number 1,6 and 9, all the other injuries are present on the lower limbs mostly on the front aspect of the thigh and the outer aspect of the thigh indicating that the animal is not more than that particular height which is most likely a wild boar. The injuries which are at the chest level (injury number 1 and 9) are most likely inflicted by the boar after the deceased had collapsed on the ground while injury number 6 resulted during the struggle.

The boar has very typical way of attacking its target where it steadily rushes forward pointing its snout and tusks forwards towards the direction of the target and inflicts the injuries. It goes back, takes position and repeatedly attacks the target till the victim is incapacitated with multiple penetrating injuries, which can have a fatal consequence if the victim does not get the timely medical help.⁴ The number of injuries sustained points towards the repeated nature of attack which is typical to a wild boar.⁴

It has also been reported that most of the mauled victims or the deceased had injuries sustained over the lower abdomen and lower limbs. In the present case too most of the injuries listed above are at the level of the lower limbs which can be attributed that the animal is most likely a wild boar.⁴

The pattern of injuries are not typical of a homicidal attack and the anatomical position of the injuries are at the level of a boar's tusks while attacking indicates that the offending animal is most likely a wild boar. The direction of injuries sustained during an attack by a canine or a wild cat is most of the time above from downwards due to their predominantly strong and big canines.⁴ Attacks from these animals invariably will be associated with the bite marks, scratch

marks and loss of associated soft tissues.⁵ The penetrating injuries perpetrated by the wild boars are most of the time are in the horizontal plane or below upwards due to the positioning of the wild boar's tusks.⁴

A defensive attack by the wild boar can most of the time be expected if it suddenly comes across humans or we unknowingly enter its territory.³ Many times, such encounters take place in unpopulated, uninhabited wilderness than the usually travelled paths by humans.³

In the above case too, the attack had taken place in a semi forested abandoned agricultural land which is a known habitat for wild boars where an untamed boar could have easily encountered the victim. Thus people living or strolling in such areas are the easy targets for the animals.

This case is being reported for its rarity and its presentation and to create awareness for the possible injuries and predisposing factors of a wild boar attack.

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