



Sometimes pathology is about the dead...

Objects in 'A History of Pathology in 50 Objects' this resource links to:

Post-mortem (or autopsy) instruments:

www.rcpath.org/the-college/50th-anniversary/50-objects/objects31-40/Obeject-32-PM-instruments

Learning Objectives

- ◆ Learning about the tools used in post-mortems (historical and current)
- ◆ Appreciating the detail required in forensic pathology
- ◆ Understanding the importance of dissection and surgical techniques
- ◆ Understanding that life processes are supported by cells organised into tissues, organs and body systems

Materials required

- ◆ Post mortem instrument cards

Time taken: 15-20 minutes

(longer if all groups are to present)

Picture link

Show the picture, and ask the students:
Can you guess what this would have been used for?

These are a specialised set of surgical instruments used to perform a post mortem examination.



Discussion activity:

Because of post-mortems in popular shows, many people think pathologists are just those who work with dead bodies. And just sometimes, they are.

The following activity is based on *Call My Bluff* (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Call_My_Bluff) or more recently *Would I Lie To You?* ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Would_I_Lie_to_You%3F_\(TV_series\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Would_I_Lie_to_You%3F_(TV_series))).

Split the students into 9 groups. Groups of 3-4 will work best for this activity. (If you only have 8 groups, omit the last card).

Each group is given a **Post-Mortem Instrument** card and in their groups only one person will be allowed to reveal the correct identity of the instrument, the other members will need to make up a use of the instrument, but related to pathology.

Give the groups a few minutes to come up with their uses for the instruments and decide their order of presenting.

Each group will take it in turns to come to the front of the class, showing the picture (front of the card), and each member of the group will present what the instrument is for.

The rest of the class are asked to guess who is telling the truth, and why.

At the end of each group presentation and after the rest of the class have guessed, the correct answer will be revealed.

Finish with a short discussion about the various instruments, how they have not changed in many years and how many of them look very much like what you would find in a toolbox... or kitchen!

Useful links

KUGEL Medical post mortem instruments:
www.kugel-medical.de/index.php?id=43&L=1

Virtual autopsy:
www.le.ac.uk/pa/teach/va/titlpag1.html

The cards will have pictures and statements as follows:

Card No.: Picture – Statement

- ◆ Card 1:
Scalpel – for fine cutting
- ◆ Card 2:
Large knife (PM40) for large cutting
- ◆ Card 3:
Forceps – for gripping tissue
- ◆ Card 4:
Ladles – for removing and measuring bodily fluids
- ◆ Card 5:
Long bladed knife – for slicing organs
- ◆ Card 6:
Specially-adapted scissors (enterotome)
– for opening the bowel
- ◆ Card 7:
Specialised shears – for cutting the ribs
- ◆ Card 8:
Hammer and chisel
– for removing the skull to examine the brain
- ◆ Card 9:
Saw – for removing the skull to examine the brain

