

DROWNING – KEY POINTS

Definition:

Drowning is a form of asphyxia caused by entry of water or fluid into air passages.

Types:

1. Wet drowning (fresh water, salt water)
2. Atypical (dry drowning, immersion syndrome, secondary drowning, shallow water)

Fresh Water Drowning:

- Hemodilution, hemolysis, hyperkalemia
- Ventricular fibrillation

Salt Water Drowning:

- Hemoconcentration, pulmonary edema
- Cardiac failure

Dry Drowning:

- Laryngeal spasm, no water in lungs

Secondary Drowning:

- Survival >24 hrs
- ARDS, pneumonia, brain damage

Immersion Syndrome:

- Sudden vagal inhibition → cardiac arrest

Postmortem Findings:

- Fine froth at mouth & nostrils
- Cutis anserina
- Washerwoman changes
- Ballooned lungs, Paltauf hemorrhages

Diatom Test:

- Supportive evidence only