

MAR-08-2008 THU 08:32 AM

FAX #:

Vitreous burner analysis was performed at my request on the specimens which had been obtained by Dr. DiCario, but never tested, with significant findings by Dr. Goldberger's Laboratory. Both the sodium and chloride were moderately elevated at 168 meq/L and 132 meq/L, respectively, indicating a fairly classic dehydration picture of the deceased. In addition, an elevated blood urea nitrogen (BUN) to creatinine ratio of greater than 20 to 1, within the vitreous, further indicates that Joyce was dehydrated.

Testing for volatiles in Joyce's blood specimen revealed the presence of acetone which was also present in the urine specimen, a reassuring and confirmatory finding. The presence of acetone, in the absence of certain poisonings where acetone is a breakdown metabolite, is indicative of prolonged fasting or starvation in which fat is being broken down for energy thereby yielding acetone as a byproduct of metabolism.

Based on the additional testing performed at my request on the very specimens that Dr. DiCario obtained, but never tested, indicates that Joyce Senter was dehydrated and was in a prolonged fasting and or starvation condition at the time of her death. How these additional findings impact her cause and manner of death findings is unknown to the extent that a complete autopsy, toxicology workup, and investigation was not performed by Dr. DiCario prior to his rulings in this case. These additional findings certainly call into question the thoroughness of Dr. DiCario's work product and determinations he subsequently makes on cases within his jurisdiction.

Thank you for allowing me to help you on this case and if you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely Yours,

Michael E. Berkland, DO.
Michael E. Berkland, DO
Forensic Pathologist

Cc: File
Carolyn Ausley

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