

Starvation

Starvation:

Deprivation of a regular and constant supply of food which is necessary to maintain the nutritional balance of the body.

- **Acute**
- **Chronic**

Clinical features:

Hunger – 2 days

Pain epigastrium relieved by pressure

Intense thirst

Absorption of subcutaneous fat

Eyes sunken, dilated pupils

Cracked lips

Coated furry tongue

Apathy & fatigue

Skin dry with disagreeable odour

Weak pulse

Hypothermia

Flaccid muscles

Oedema face & feet

Constipation then diarrhoea

Concentrated urine

Loss of 40% body weight

Death

Fatal period:

10-12 days (Food & Water withdrawn)

6 – 8 weeks (Only food withdrawn)

Body condition, Age and sex variations exist

Treatment:

Start small liquid sips (water, juice, glucose)

Vitamins

Intravenous nutrients

Body warmth

Force feeding?

P.M. Appearance:

External:

- Emaciation
- Sunken eyeballs
- Glistening eyes
- Coated tongue
- Dry skin with disagreeable odour
- Evidence of violence?

Internal:

- Loss of subcutaneous, omental & mesenteric fat – Intestines papery thin
- **G**all bladder distended with thick bile
- Stomach may contain inedible substances
- **K**etone bodies in urine

Medico-legal questions:

? Whether death was caused by starvation

? Whether suicidal, homicidal or accidental