

An exploration into the sensemaking of crime scene investigators at sudden and suspicious deaths

Examining the role of crime scene investigators (CSIs) at sudden and suspicious deaths.

Key details

Lead institution	University of South Wales
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Police region	Wales
Level of research	PhD
Project start date	April 2021
Date due for completion	December 2026

Research context

This research will examine the role that crime scene investigators (CSIs) have when they attend sudden and suspicious deaths.

Jones (2016) has stated that in England and Wales, CSIs routinely attend scenes of sudden and suspicious deaths, yet, in the current literature there is scarcely any mention of their role at these scenes. This research will examine the death investigation process and identify the roles that CSIs have within this process.

The researcher will specifically explore how the CSIs interpret and make sense of the death scenes they attend, looking at what decisions they make, how they arrived at these decisions, and what extrinsic and intrinsic factors can impact this decision-making process.

The research will also identify how the opinions and decisions made by CSIs are regarded within the wider investigative framework and the impact these decisions can have on the investigation of sudden and suspicious deaths.

Research methodology

This research will employ a qualitative research methodology using semi-structured interviews with actors within the death investigation process including:

- crime scene investigators
- police officers (CID, response, major crime investigation teams)
- pathologists
- coroners and coroners officers

The researcher will also use ethnographic methodology by shadowing CSIs as they attend death scenes to gain an understanding of how they arrive at the decisions they do and make sense of the scenes they attend.

Research participation

The researcher is looking to recruit:

- crime scene investigators
- police officers (CID, response, major crime investigation teams)
- pathologists
- coroners and coroners officers

If you would like to participate in this research, please contact the researcher directly.