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## Shooting through clothing in firearm suicides

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### Abstract

There is a longstanding empirical rule that people who commit suicide rarely shoot through their clothing, but rather put it aside to expose the nude skin. Signs of shots through clothing have always been considered suspicious, raising presumptions of the presence of an abettor. Our report, based on a retrospective study of fatal suicidal firearm injuries from the years 1980 to 2007, points out that suicide victims only rarely remove clothing from the site of the future entry wound. The report covered 43 cases with fatal gunshot wounds in the area of the thorax, with only four persons (9%) removing the clothing present in the area of the subsequent self-inflicted wound. Defects present on the clothing of a victim cannot, therefore, be understood as an absolute criterion for disproving the possibility of suicide, and nor do they necessarily indicate an unfortunate accident or homicide. If, however, the suicide victim removes the clothing from the area of the future wound, then this is almost always an indication of suicide.

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