Do Not Turn Your Back to a Dangerous Animal: A Case of a Fatal Selfie with Poisonous Ray in the South of Iraq

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Abstract Self-imaging, or as it is known as selfie, has developed widely with the development of the mobile phone and the appearance of the smart phones. This practice became unsafe as some of the people trying to prove their ability to present in a dangerous situation, location, or with dangerous animals such as sharks, stingrays, lions, etc. Fatalities owing to selfies display noteworthy upsurge recently according to records from around the world. Therefore, the government of any country needs to interfere with public practices to save more lives. This chapter describes a fatal case of selfie that includes a victim who was interested to show his friends and family how good fisherman is he and took selfie with a mob-handed stingray *Brevitrygon imbricata* (Bloch & Schneider, 1801), and this selfie was his last shot to be taken by him in his life. The inflicting of poisonous spine by stingray is a common occurrence, and some incidents were shown to be fatal. The abdominal area where the victim has received the sting ray stabbings was an area where the venom of the stingray becomes deadly and not like other parts of the body of the casualty. At the end of the chapter, recommendations were given about how to avoid dangerous selfie and the stingray stabbings.

Keywords Self-imaging · Selfie · Photos · Dangerous animals · Rays · Public practices

1 Introduction

Selfie or self-imaging is a word, which turn out to be very prevalent in the world in these days. The recognition of this term included in the Oxford Dictionaries Word of the year 2013 (Oxford, 2013). They have become a new interaction channel. Nevertheless, in some circumstances, selfie habit may lead to a dangerous behavior pretending important ethical, perceptual, and bodily health inferences on the persons

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snapping selfies (Adamkolo and Elmi-Nur 2015). In exciting instances, users involve in actions that represent them to be exploratory or improve their look to others while endangering their personal life (Leary et al. 1994). In some countries, selfies were prohibited in certain places where there are an eminent danger such as height, water, and wild animals (Kurniawan et al. 2013).

Large number of reports of death and injuries due to having dangerous selfies were archived. The number of the incidences has increased expressively in the last few years. In the USA in 2014, 15 people were reported dead due to taking selfies, while in 2015 the number increased to 39 (VOA 2016). Moreover, a number of selfie coincidences took place in India, and all of them happened at hazardous locations (Willis 2016).

On contrary to shark attacks, stingrays are quiet, regularly not hostile, and usually attack man when disturbed. Human encounters stingray's injuries frequently as these creatures are found in all temperate and tropical oceans internationally (Diaz 2008). Several deadly incidences were revealed as a result of inflicting stingray spine and associated infected stingray injuries have now been described (Russell et al. 1958; Marinkelle 1966; Diaz 2008).

Nonetheless, as extra sea users discovering seacoasts, there will be more likely *for* stingray injuries with poor results. A revised meta-analysis of the descriptive epidemiology of stingray damages, the systems of stingray inflicting their poisonous spines in the body of the victim, and the administration policies for stingray injuries is specified at the present time and may progress the doctor's capability to improve management and to reduce stingray wounds in sea users (Diaz 2008).

The present chapter reports on a fatal selfie incidence that happened to a young man in the south of Iraq. The description of the case is given below and it is notation for the parents, young generation, the generation of selfie culture and the policy makers to put a plan for education against the use of selfie in dangerous locations and with animals.

2 Case Report

The present incidence is about a 29-year-old fisherman usually fishing with his father in the coastal area of Khor al-Zubair area, south of Iraq. A big (250 mm disc diameter), male, Bengal whipray *Brevitrygon imbricata* (Bloch & Schneider, 1801) was the causative agent.

One specimen of Bengal whipray was among the catch of the young fisherman and his father. The young man insisted to bring the ray home to show his friends his experience in catching fishes. The ray was kept at the base of the boat and covered with shallow water that kept it alive during the journey back home. At home, the young man put the ray outside the house on a grass area thinking that it is already dead, with its ventral side facing the ground. Then, he laid down on the ray holding his smart phone with his left hand to perform a selfie with the stingray. It were a few minutes since the young man rested on the body of the ray and started to scream of

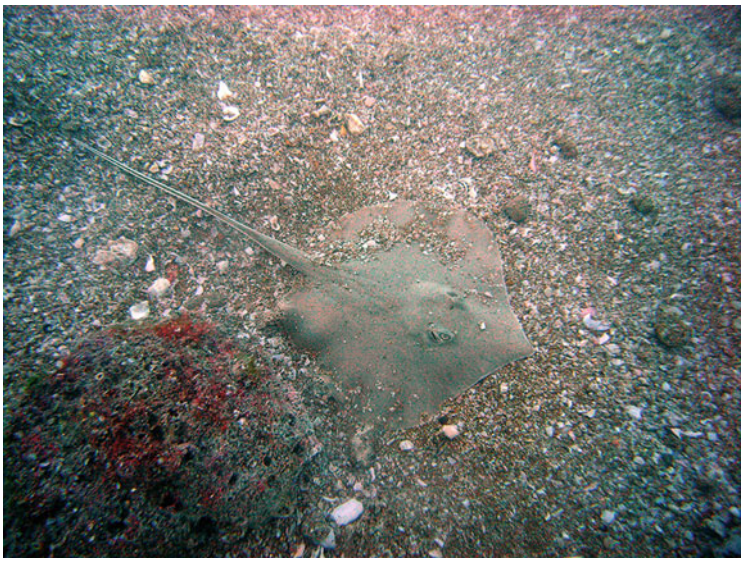

Fig. 1 Brevitrygon imbricata (Bloch & Schneider, 1801). Photograph by Thomas Pohl, Germany

severe pain in his back. Blood started to come out of his body at the area of his kidney. The victim felt unconscious soon after his scream. Members of his family rushed the young man to the nearest clinic for treatment, but the young man died a few minutes after reaching the clinic.

The preliminary examination of the body of the deceased young man showed to receive 15 stings from the adult male stingray, with 5 of those went directly to his kidney. The postmortem report revealed that the dead man died suffering from severe injuries mixed with deadly poison inflicted by the ray. The selfie image that the deceased man taken was kept by the members of the victim and shown to the author of the chapter. For privacy of the victim, no consent was given by the family of the victim to publish it. Therefore, the author has included a photo of the stingray that caused the death of the young man in this chapter (Fig. 1). This photo has been taken from the net and its source has been acknowledged. The identification of the species of the ray was confirmed by the author after viewing the selfie image.

3 Remarks

The Bengal whipray is mainly marine species and sometimes enters brackish water living at depth of maximum of 50 meters in the tropical areas in the Indo-West Pacific region (Carpenter et al. 1997). It could have a maximum of 2500 mm disc width (Talwar and Jhingran 1991). Members of this species prefer inshore coastal areas of sandy and mud bottoms (Sommer et al. 1996). The biology of the Bengal

whipray includes feeding on bottom invertebrates (Rainboth 1996) and ovoviviparous (Ege 1930), with embryos nourishing firstly on yolk, and then getting extra food from the mother by ancillary absorption of uterine fluid supplemented with mucus, fat, or protein via specified structures (Dulvy and Reynolds 1997). This species has two poisonous spines their whip-like tail that makes a lot of wounds to human. These spines are hard, sharp, bilaterally serrated, and cephalically directed. Spines vary in length by the fish size (Campbell et al. 2003). The poison device of stingrays is constituted of retroserrated stings, which are enclosed with a thin layer of epithelium that has particular secretory cells internal of or aside the epithelial cells (Scharf 2002). These cells discharge neurotoxic and cardiotoxic poison that comprises proteins, serotonin, phosphodiesterase, and vasoconstrictor factors (Weiss and Wolfenden 2001). As the poison of stingrays is cardiotoxic, if wound occurs in the abdominal region, it can lead to death (Haddad et al. 2004; Perkins and Morgan 2004; Diaz 2008), but the wounds in the remainder of body such as hand, foot, and ankle make a sore cuts with reasonable to harsh signs (Dehghani et al. 2009). Therefore, the incidence reported in this chapter was fatal as it happened in the abdomen region of the victim.

The present case of stingray attack reminded us of the death of the famous Australian crocodile hunter, Steve Erwin, who died on September 2006 after experienced fatal incidence of stingray stabbing while he was filming with "massive" 8-foot-wide stingray in chest-high water (CNN, Reuters 2006). *The differences are Steve Erwin was dealing with a live stingray underwater, while the victim in the present case was lying on a body of nearly dead stingray found on the ground, and the victim in the present case was ignorant and thought that the stingray was dead and took a selfie image. The similarity is the action of the stingrays in both cases, which is stabbing using its deadly barb stings.*

4 Recommendations

According to Kurniawan et al. (2013), the danger that can result from the selfie can be divided into the following groups, i.e., (1) elevation-linked selfies; (2) aquatic environment-linked selfies; (3) traffic-linked selfies; (4) dangerous animal-linked selfies; and (5) arm-associated selfies. In avoiding additional negative influences of dangerous selfie, a strategy controlling about taking selfies is obligatory. In several countries, notices or signs were given reminding people to not take a selfie. Therefore authorized government rule with clear guideline and approval to stop more fatalities of dangerous selfies in the future is mandatory. The administration can interfere by creation a communal strategy controlling selfies in conditions of conducts, state, and locations of selfies like what other countries have go through to guard their peoples from getting injured or killed due to taking dangerous selfies.

Since stingrays are innately quiet and frisky aquatic organisms, most stingray incidences of injuries caused by inflicting the sting of these creatures into the body of the victim could be banned by modest teaching and evasion programs. Waders, skin

and scuba divers, and snorkel divers must constantly check the seafloors and not deliberately aggravate meetings with stingrays. Passing through shallow bays, estuaries, and tidal pools should always be undertaken with caution.

Divers should not get close to the seabed to evade possibly deadly thoracoabdominal stingray wounds. Diving suits and diving boots will offer no guard to stop stingray spine cuts. Fishers must not try to unfasten or untangle a stingray from a fishing line or net or try to seize a stingray waving on deck to fling it overboard.

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