



**FOR PUBLIC RELEASE: Coroner Judgement of Inquiry and Inquest  
Inquisition and Recommendations**

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**Yukon Coroners Service: Judgement of Inquiry into the death of: Darrell Richard BROWN**

**Coroner Investigative File No.: 45202017048**

Name: Darrell Richard BROWN Date of Birth: 1973/02/13 Date of Death: 2017/10/15  
YYYY/MM/DD YYYY/MM/DD  
Address: Haines Junction, Yukon  
Street Address Province/Territory Postal Code  
Ethnic Origin: First Nation Location of Death: North shore of Dezadeash River

**Cause of Death**

Alcoholic ketoacidosis

Hypothermia contributing to death.

**Manner of Death**

Accidental

**Autopsy Findings**

An autopsy was performed at Vancouver General Hospital on October 26, 2017.

The autopsy identified limited early pneumonia within the lungs which was likely asymptomatic, moderate to severe fatty change of the liver and an area of old bruising on the right temporal lobe (consistent with the clinic history of seizures). The kidneys showed changes that are seen in association with individuals in ketoacidosis. With toxicological analysis confirming this with the presence of beta-hydroxybutyrate and acetone. Ketoacidosis is the condition in which the body is producing ketones as an energy source (by way of fat metabolism). The body uses this pathway for energy production in times when it cannot utilize glucose (the body's normal/most common energy source). Ketones within the body are acidic in nature and cause significant metabolic dysfunction in the body, which can lead to death.

**Toxicological Findings**

Blood analysis revealed the presence of acetone and levetiracetam (a medication to treat epilepsy) but no other substances. Vitreous (fluid from the eye) demonstrated the presence of beta-hydroxybutyrate and acetone.

### Circumstances of Death

Mr. BROWN was last seen in Haines Junction on the afternoon of October 12, 2017. After a three-day search by the community his body was found on the north shore of the Dezadeash River near Haines Junction.

Mr. BROWN suffered from chronic alcohol use and seizures due to epilepsy and alcohol withdrawal.

Temperatures at the time of Mr. BROWN's disappearance ranged from +4C to -4C with measurable light snow throughout the three days.

### Significant Factors/Conclusions

Mr. BROWN had been missing from his home for three days prior to the discovery of his body.

Mr. BROWN suffered from epileptic and alcohol withdrawal seizures and chronic alcoholism. Toxicology revealed the presence of hydroxybutyrate and acetone confirming a state of ketoacidosis. In Mr. BROWN's case it is believed that his history of chronic alcoholic use, along with decreased food intake, gave rise to the ketones in his system creating life-threatening metabolic irregularity.

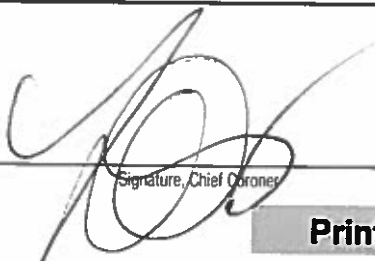
Given that Mr. BROWN had succumbed in an outdoor environment it is certain that some element of hypothermia contributed to his death.

I therefore find that Darrell Richard BROWN came to his death on or about October 15, 2017 from Unnatural causes, to wit: Alcoholic ketoacidosis. Hypothermia was a contributing factor in this death.

I classify his death as Accidental

### Recommendations

No recommendations



Signature, Chief Coroner

Whitehorse, Yukon

Province/Territory

August 15, 2018

Date

Print

Save

Clear