

Gangrene: A Socially Stigmatized Disease Essay

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When presented with a patient suffering from severe gangrene, how do you react? In many cases, empathy is lost and replaced with personal disgust. Because of its' gruesome appearance and foul smell, gangrene carries an undeserving social stigma with it. These patients may be staring death in the face, so why are we staring at them? In this paper I will describe [gangrene](#) and the different types, explain the risk factors and causes, discuss the complications, as well as treatment options and outcomes. I will also give details on limb amputation and how it affects the psychological well-being of the patient. By the end of this report I hope to have portrayed a different side of this tragic condition; the patient's side.

What is gangrene? Is it "green"? The word gangrene comes from the Latin word *gangreana* and the Greek word *gangraina*, which both mean "purification of tissues". There is no link to the English word "green". (Nordqvist) Gangrene is localized death of soft tissue, caused by prolonged interruption of the [blood](#) supply that may result from injury or infection. Human cells require nutrients and oxygen to survive and they get this from blood. If cell blood supply goes down below a certain level, the cells will become damaged and will eventually die. Organisms such as bacteria, viruses, parasites and fungi attack tissues and cells. Our white blood cells and the Thymus cells (T-cells) form part of our immune system and fight germs. If the blood supply is cut there, will be no white cells or T-

cells to stop the organisms from multiplying and causing an infection. (Nordqvist) Diseases in which gangrene is prone to occur include arteriosclerosis, diabetes, Raynaud's disease, Buerger's disease, and typhus. It may also occur fro...

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