

Woman who died during butt-lift surgery was injected with silicone, report says

The revelation comes three days after an arrest in case

The man is not licensed to practice medicine

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The Miami woman who died after a visit to a sham cosmetic-surgery clinic was illegally injected in the buttocks with liquid silicone, police said in an arrest report released Monday.

The revelation came three days after homicide detectives arrested Jose Robusto, a Venezuelan national, after he returned to Miami after two



years on the lam. The charges: manslaughter and illegally practicing medicine causing death.

Police said Robusto, 43, who is not licensed to practice medicine in Florida or the United States, confessed to his role in the death of 28-year-old Suyima Torres in April 2013.

"The victim's blood contained very large amounts of silicone, an element used for industrial purposes which includes electronics, as well as in glass, cement and ceramics," Miami-Dade Detective Juan Segovia wrote in his arrest report.

Torres was a married mother of two young daughters.

"The family is cautiously optimistic," said Miami lawyer Jorge Silva, who represents her family. "They are excited there was an arrest and that they may get some justice for the death of this young, innocent woman."

Butt enhancements are big business in South Florida — in clinics both legal and illegal. However, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has not approved liquid silicone for buttocks enhancements.

The American Society of Plastic surgeons estimates that last year Americans paid plastic surgeons more

than \$92 million on legal butt enhancement procedures. That doesn't include fees for other medical professionals involved in the surgeries.

Robusto's arrest comes as the effects of botched cosmetic surgeries in South Florida have again hit the news in recent weeks.

A little more than a week ago, a 29-year-old woman visiting South Florida from West Virginia "suffered medical complications," police said, and later died after undergoing a procedure at Encore Plastic Surgery at 1738 W. 49th St. in Hialeah. She was not injected with silicone but with her own fat, a common procedure.

That clinic has ties to previous cosmetic-surgery related deaths, using doctors who have maimed patients repeatedly and then discharged them to recover in hotels and even horse stables with no medical attention, according to state records.

Silicone butt enhancement cases have indeed resulted in arrests.

Last year, federal prosecutors in Broward County

convicted a Peruvian woman who promised butt enhancements, but with silicone falsely labeled as a more expensive product. In 2013, an Orlando man was charged with giving illegal silicone butt injections.

Many more cases have stemmed from black-market operations, done in hotel rooms, living rooms and faux clinics. Last year, a Hialeah couple pleaded guilty after botched injections that disfigured the rump of a stripper.

A Miami Gardens transgender woman named Oneal Ron Morris garnered worldwide headlines for injecting cash-strapped women with a concoction of Fix-a-Flat tire sealant, cement, silicone, mineral oil, and super glue. She is facing a manslaughter charge after one woman died in Broward.

In Torres' case, she died after visiting the Cuerpos Health and Aesthetics in West Miami-Dade.

During her first visit on April 1, 2013, police said, Robusto injected Torres as part of the butt-lift procedure. Five days later, Torres returned but her backside was still too swollen to have the sutures removed.

Then on April 11, Torres injected her a second time, according to an arrest report. Torres collapsed outside the clinic and was rushed to Doctors Hospital in Coral Gables, where she died later that day.

The medical examiner's office ruled she died of an embolism. The Torres family has since filed a lawsuit against Doctors Hospital, alleging they failed to treat her properly.

No suit has been filed against Cuerpos, which no longer exists as a company. "There is no one to sue," said Silva, the Torres family attorney.

The Cuerpos clinic belonged to Ruth Planas, and was only licensed to function as a massage salon. However, on its Facebook page, the now-shuttered clinic announced that it employed certified plastic surgeons.

After the death, Robusto returned to his native Venezuela, where he lives and purports to be a doctor. He was arrested Friday night after flying into Miami from Venezuela via Aruba.

According to the arrest report, he admitted to Detective Segovia that he performed the first injection. Although he admitted he was at the clinic the day Torres died, Robusto denied injecting her that day, the report said.

Robusto, who had his passport taken by police, has since posted \$12,500 bond and has left jail to await trial. He will be arraigned on June 20.

Court records do not list a defense lawyer for Robusto. He could not be reached for comment.