

A retrospective study on homicidal autopsy cases at Government Kilpauk Medical College Hospital, Chennai

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Abstract

Homicide means killing of a human being by another human being. This retrospective study analyses the data of 35 homicidal death cases during the period of January 2012 to December 2012. This study is carried out by analysis of data from postmortem reports, inquest forms, History of case and postmortem registers of the Forensic Medicine department. The analysis of the data done manually by calculator and excel spread sheet of windows 8. Our study reveals that the victims were mostly females (51.43%) followed by males (48.57%) and victims in the age group of 20 – 29 years and 30-39 constituted (31.43%). The main motive was infidelity (25.71%) and sharp weapon injuries (54.29%) were the commonest pattern followed by Burns (22.88%) and (71.43%) of victims died on the spot. Homicidal deaths accounts for (1.15%) of autopsies.


Key words: Homicidal deaths, autopsy, motive, sharp weapon, shock and hemorrhage.

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INTRODUCTION

Homicide is defined as killing of one human being by another human being. Homicide has been a most serious crime known to mankind, right from old civilization to present day. It is one of the leading causes of unnatural deaths. Killing of an individual is the highest level of aggression found in all the cultures, however motives have been changing. To commit a murder two elements which incorporates together. They are “Mens-rea” which means preplanning and “Actus-reus” which means the actual execution. The incidence of homicide has been

increasing because of several factors, like stresses of life due to monetary, emotional, health issues etc. The various pattern of homicidal deaths include assault by sharp weapon, blunt weapons, strangulation, burns, firm arms, smothering and poisoning etc. Homicidal deaths are challengeable for the investigating agency to reveal the mystery and for Judicial system to give a punishment for guilty. Hence scientific interpretation of autopsy finding is important. This retrospective study is undertaken to analyze the profile of homicidal deaths in its all aspects. The knowledge thus gained can be high lightened to reveal the magnitude of its impact on the society as well as to make an attempt for solution.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present retrospective study is carried out by the analysis of homicidal deaths from January 2012 to December 2012. They were autopsied at Forensic Medicine department in Government Kilpauk Medical College, Chennai. Proforma is preferred citing different variable such as ages, sex, motive, type of weapon, Survival period. These data's are collected from postmortem notes, post mortem certificates, inquest

papers, History of cases and postmortem registered and these data analyzed manually by calculator and excel spread sheet of windows 8.

Selection criteria for the cases:

- 1) All the cases investigated under IPC 302 by the investigating officer.

- 2) Victims from all age groups.

Exclusion criteria

- (i) Cases subjected for autopsy with alleged history (on suspected history of homicide which were later registered non homicidal deaths from autopsy findings.

RESULTS

Table 1: Distribution of victims based on age and sex

Sl. No.	Age group (in years)	No. of males (%)	No. of females (%)	Total (%)
1	0-9	-	-	-
2	10-19	-	2 (11.11)	2 (5.71)
3	20-29	6 (35.29)	5 (27.77)	11 (31.43)
4	30-39	5 (29.41)	6 (33.33)	11 (31.43)
5	40-49	3 (8.57)	2 (11.11)	5 (14.24)
6	50-59	1 (5.88)	1 (5.55)	2 (5.71)
7	60 + above	2 (11.11)	2 (11.11)	4 (11.42)
	Total	17 (48.57%)	18 (15.43%)	35 (100%)

Table 2: Distribution of homicides according to place of occurrence of crime

Sl. No.	Place	No (%)
1	Victim’s house	16 (45.71)
2	Work place	5 (14.29)
3	Street	9 (25.71)
4	Isolated house	2 (5.71)
5	Railway track	1 (2.86)
6	Assailant’s house	2 (5.71)
7	Others	-
	Total	35 (100%)

Table 3: Distribution of homicides according to time of occurrence of crime

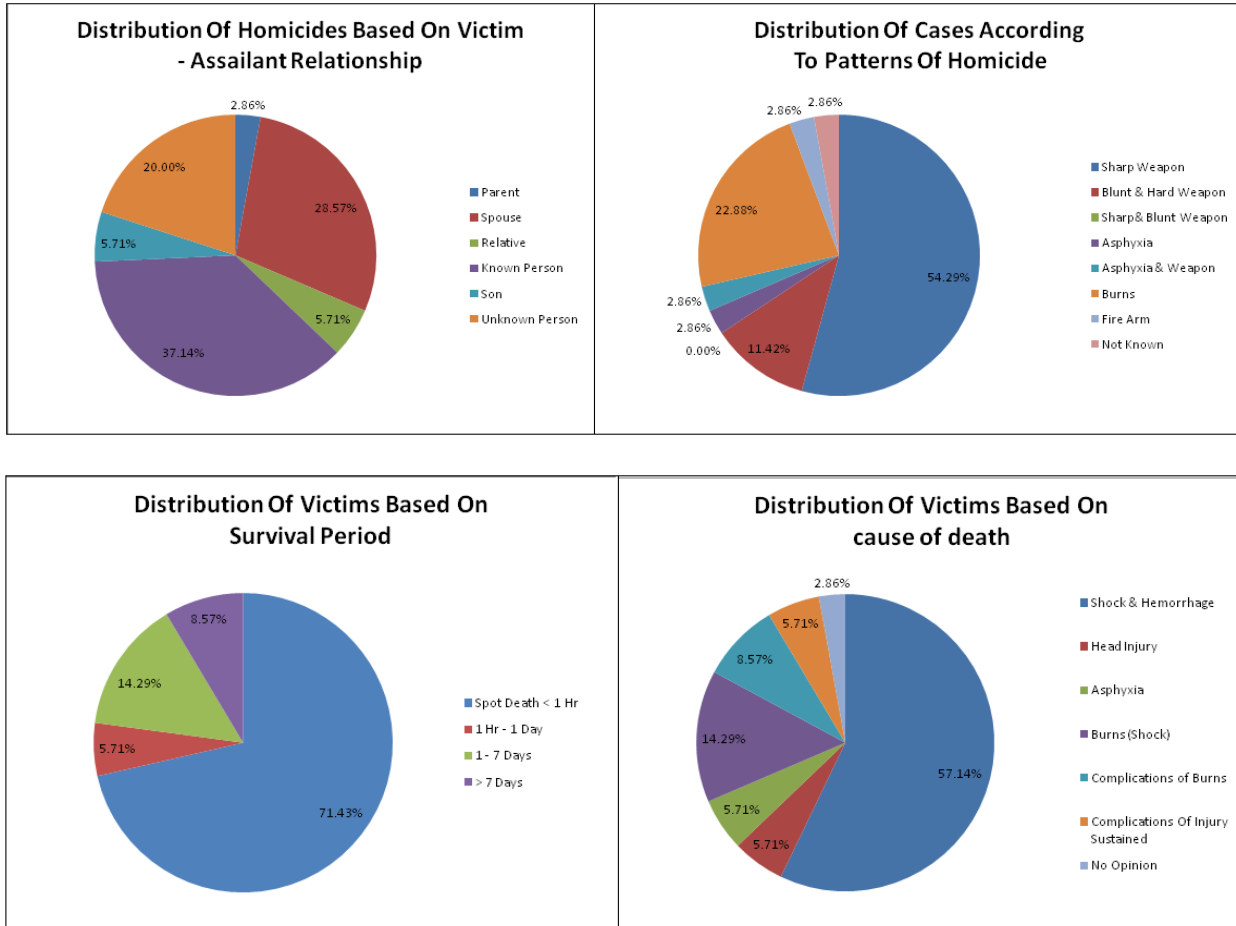
Sl. No.	Time	No (%)
1	Morning (6 am - 12 pm)	4 (11.42)
2	Afternoon (12 pm – 6 pm)	9 (25.71)
3	Evening (6 pm – 12 Mid night)	12 (34.29)
4	Late Night (12 – 6 am)	8 (22.86)
5	Not known	2 (5.71)
	Total	35 (100%)

Table 4: Distribution of homicides based on motive

Sl. No.	Motive	No (%)
1	Illegal Affairs	9 (25.71)
2	Revenge	3 (8.57)
3	Properly dispute	3 (8.57)
4	Sudden Provocation while I argument	4 (11.43)
5	Family problems	7 (20.00)
6	Liquor related	2 (5.71)
7	Robbery	2 (5.71)
8	Not Known	5 (14.29)
	Total	35 (100%)

Table 9: Distribution of defence wounds in homicidal cases

Sl.No.	Defence wounds	Males (%)	Females (%)	Total (%)
1	Present	8 (47.51)	2 (11.11)	10 (28.51)
2	Absent	9 (52.94)	16 (88.88)	25 (71.43)
	Total	17	18	35 (100 %)



DISCUSSION

During the study period total 3052 autopsies were conducted at Forensic Medicine department at Government Kilpauk Medical College, Chennai out of which homicidal deaths constituted 35 cases (1.51%) females are constituted 18 cases (51.43%) and male victims are 17 (48.57%) which almost equal to male to female ratio 1:1. Which is similar to observations in studies conducted by Kominato Y. The important finding of the study is the commonly affected age group was 20-29 and 30-39 years 11 cases in both sexes (31.43%) which is similar to study conducted by Basappa, Gupta Avanes and Mohanty M.K. and followed by 40-49 years (14.29) and 50-59 years (5.71%). Maximum number of victims 25 (71.43%) died on the spot. This may be due to multiple injuries over multiple region of the bodies. As far as type of injury is concerned sharp weapon injuries

(54.29%) was the most common which is similar to studies conducted by Basappa, P. Wahlsten and Gupta Avanes and followed by burns injuries (22.88%). Maximum number of the homicides took place in the evening (34.29%) followed by late night (22.86%).The observations are similar to the studies conducted by Basappa, P.Walshten and Gupta Avanes. In most of the homicides the motive was infidelity or illegal affair related problems (25.71%) and followed by sudden provocation during an argument (11.43%). Regarding the causes of death shock and hemorrhage due to injuries was the most common cause of death (57.14%) followed by burns injuries (22.86%). Defence injuries seen in 10 cases (28.51%) and it more probable on male victims (47.51%) bearing multiple body injuries.

CONCLUSION

Homicidal deaths constituted to 1.15% of autopsies conducted. Maximum number of homicides occurred in the age group of 20-29 yrs, 30-39yrs in both sexes constituting 31.43% respectively. Maximum homicidal took place at the victim's residence 45.71% and street 25.71%. The main motive behind the homicide was illegal affair related problems (25.371%). Most of the homicides took places in the evening (34.28%) and late night (22.86%). Sharp weapon injuries were the common pattern (54.29%) followed by burns injuries (22.88%). Most of the victims died on the spot (71.43%).

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