



## Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences Section – 2005

### I3 Assessing Increases in Violence: An Analysis of Homicide Cases From Orleans Parish, Louisiana

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The goal of this presentation is to present the trends in homicide cases occurring in Orleans Parish, Louisiana. Research indicates that homicides in Orleans Parish are becoming more violent.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by offering a research method, which can be applied to a study of homicide in any city. Such research can be used to implement measures to decrease the rates of homicide in any area.

This study is an analysis of homicide cases from the Orleans Parish coroner's office. Research was performed from June of 2003 until January of 2004. A total of 1,334 homicide cases were reviewed. Autopsy, police, and toxicology reports were assessed for each case. The first goal of the research was to determine trends in homicide cases in Orleans Parish. To establish changes over time, the years 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, and 2000 were reviewed. A total of 21 variables were considered to determine trends in victim profiles and in the homicide incident itself.

The results of this study indicate that African American males aged 21 to 30 are the primary victims of homicide in Orleans Parish. Homicides were more likely to occur in the beginning of the year and during the summer months. Homicides were also more likely to occur on weekends and during the late evening and early morning hours. Certain police districts were found to consistently be more dangerous than others. Homicide cases were also analyzed based on the type of weapons used. Gun related homicides were consistently in the majority.

The second goal was to determine whether the amount of violence in homicide cases has increased over time. All homicides are violent in nature. However, the amount of violence can differ from case to case. The goal of this research was to determine whether overkill has become more common in recent years. When overall violence was analyzed, the results indicated that homicides in Orleans Parish have become more violent in recent years. Both the number of overly violent cases per year and the average number of wounds per victim increased over the years under study. These results indicate that today perpetrators are more likely to cause excessive wounding to their victims than they were in the past.

Homicide cases determined to be more violent were analyzed separately to analyze trends. For this analysis, only nine of the previously used variables were considered. Again, the results indicated that the victims of overly violent homicides in Orleans Parish were principally African American males aged 21 to 30. Many of the trends in overly violent homicides were similar to those found when all of the cases were analyzed.

Analysis of homicide cases in different cities can provide valuable research information. The information gathered from such an analysis can be used to aid those who are the primary targets of homicide. Such studies can also be used to understand the nature of homicide and what measures can be taken to decrease the rates of homicide in any given area. An analysis of this kind can inspire future research into why homicides are becoming more violent, information about the perpetrators of violent crime, and why people commit murder.

#### **Homicide, Trends, Violence**