



D40 Term and Definitional Analysis of Sex- Related Homicide

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After attending this presentation, attendees will: (1) understand the difficulty in conducting proper research when no single term or definition exists; (2) understand the difficulty in maintaining statistics when no single term or definition exists; and, (3) understand the importance of having a single term and definition both for law enforcement and clinicians.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by better informing attendees of the importance and need of a single term and definition in the recognition, investigation, and classification of sex-related homicide.

Sex-related homicide is a heinous crime. It is also a crime that grips the community in which the crime occurs. What is not well known about this particular crime is what the appropriate, correct, or even most descriptive term or definition is. What is also not known about sex-related homicide is what the true statistics are. Researchers vary in their opinion as to whether or not sex-related homicide is rare or rampant. With 18 terms and 48 definitions, it is easy to see how it would be difficult to decide if it is rare or rampant. These terms range from erotophonophilia to lust psychotic killing to sexual murder. Several of the terms have multiple definitions and some terms have no definition. Given the broad spectrum of terms and definitions, it is easy to see how it would be difficult to determine the statistics. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) uses information voluntarily submitted by law enforcement agencies all over the United States to prepare the Uniformed Crime Report (UCR) and the Supplemental Homicide Report (SHR). From the information submitted, they use motive to classify the homicide. A cursory glance of UCR and the SHR would lead one to believe that sex-related homicide is rare if they were to only consider rape, other-sex offenses and possibly prostitution & criminalized vice. Sex-related homicide is much more than rape, other-sex offenses and prostitution & criminalized vice and should be recognized as such.

This research explored a wide range of terms and definitions, as well as unpublished data from the FBI. The resources utilized were from peer reviewed articles, educational textbooks, and the National Clearinghouse for Science, Technology, and the Law (NCSTL). The unpublished data revealed the statistics prepared by the FBI for the UCR and SHR for homicides with known or obvious sexual relations range from 0%-2%. These particular homicide statistics only include rape, other-sex offenses, and prostitution & criminalized vice. There is also a large homicide category which is labeled as unknown. The unknown category averages 29% of the annual homicides. A brief overview of the total number of homicides in comparison to the unknown motive category shows: the total number of homicides from 1980 through 1989 was: 190,020. Of these homicides, 42,363 or 22.29% were placed into the unknown motives category. The total number of homicides from 1990 through 1999 was: 190,906. Of these homicides, 56,409 or 29.55% of these were placed into the unknown motives category. The total number of homicides from 2000 through 2008 was: 129,559. Of these homicides, 48,732 or 37.61% were placed into the unknown motives category. From the 1980's to the 1990's there was an increase of 7.25% in homicides placed into the unknown motives category. From the 1990's to the 2000's there was an increase of 8.07% in homicides placed into the unknown motives category. Overall, from the 1980's to the 2000's there was a 15.32% increase in homicides placed into the unknown motives category. With the number of unknown motive homicides increasing, the need for better categorization becomes more apparent. Several researchers acknowledge the unknown category as a veritable dumping ground for homicides with no known motive and this category has a high likelihood of being the category where the majority of sex-related homicides are placed.

There are a wide variety of terms and definitions to choose from when researching sex-related homicide. These can contribute to research weakness, inaccurate statistics, and subpar investigations. To remedy this problem, there should be one universal term and definition which both law enforcement and clinicians can use. In addition to the use of one term and definition, the statistics for sex-related homicide would be better maintained with the use of the four categories as ascribed by Vernon J. Geberth rather than on the basis of motive as is currently used by the FBI. At the conclusion of this study, the following facts remain:



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researchers and law enforcement cannot agree on a universal term or definition, they cannot agree on whether sex-related homicide is rare or rampant, and the available statistics are not entirely accurate.

Sex-Related Homicide, Lust Murder, Sexual Killing