



## Pathology/Biology Section - 2013

### G17 Child Homicides in Adana, Turkey

Ahmet Hilal, MD\*, Kenan Kaya, Burak E. Celik, Necmi Cekin, MD, and Mete K. Gulmen, PhD, MD, Cukurova Univ, Dept of Forensic Medicine, Adana, TURKEY

After attending this presentation, attendees will learn the incidence of child homicides in Adana, Turkey, from January of 2009 to December of 2011, and its comparison to larger studies

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by increasing awareness, which weapons are mostly used in childhood homicides, the most common age groups of homicides, and if there is any relationship between the weapons used and age groups.

Violence is a common and important public health problem in Turkey, as it is all over the world.<sup>1,2</sup> Homicide is the last point of no return and solution. In nearly all communities, homicide is being accepted as a most serious crime, and it is being punished with severe sanctions while prevention strategies are being developed. It was said that violence-caused deaths (homicide and suicide) induce more than 50,000 people's deaths between the ages of 15-24 every year in the U.S. with homicide being the second most common reason of death.<sup>3</sup>

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, all human beings below the age of 18 are considered children, except for those who have previously attained majority.<sup>4</sup> According to the same convention, contracting countries are obligated to make a maximum effort for the survival and development of children. They are obligated to take precautions and make legal arrangements, correcting inconveniences of their laws due to the necessity of convention. Governors must know that childhood deaths, which are caused by violence, are preventable only by taking precautions.

For this study, 5,159 cases were investigated retrospectively and were medicolegally autopsied at the Institute of Forensic Medicine Adana Group Authority Morgue Specialty office between the years of 2009 and 2011. One hundred twenty cases below the age of 18, which were determined to be homicides according to prosecution records, crime scene investigation reports, and autopsy signs, were used in the study. Cases were investigated according to cases' ages, genders, objects (weapons) causing death, and localization of wounds. Toxicological analyses of all cases were reviewed.

It was seen that 79 (66%) of 120 child victims were male and 41 (34%) were female. The youngest was 7-month-old and the eldest 18-years-old. The average age was 13.5 years. It was detected that, when the children were grouped according to their ages, most cases 85 (70.8%) were between the ages of 13 and 18. Looking at methods of homicide, it was seen that firearms were in first place with 73 (60.8%) cases, sharp objects followed with 28 cases, and obtuse traumatic lesions were in third with 14 cases. Looking at injured parts of the victims, it was detected that the head was in first place with 50 (41.7%) of the cases, followed by the rib cage area with 21 cases. It was seen that the most wounds by firearms in a single case was six and the most penetrating stab wounds in a single case was 33. It was detected that, when looking at shooting ranges in the cases killed by firearms, the shooting was done from an adjacent range in 40 cases. Tetrahydro Cannabinoid (THC) was found in three cases and amphetamine was found in one case per toxicological reports.

This study was done with the goal of revealing the incidence of childhood homicides at Adana with the goal of calling the attention of governors whose charge was protecting the children exposed to that violence. It also provides data needed for fulfilling the responsibilities of governors according to the international conventions which they were signed.

Even if removing the violence isn't possible, revealing its reasons and methods provides the possibility of forming strategies. In our study, it was seen that, like most developed and developing countries, homicides by firearms is in first place. But it was seen that in some countries, where the firearms' usage is seriously limited, penetrating stab wounds take first place. Limiting the access to firearms will lead to a decline in childhood homicides in all age groups.

#### References:

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#### Child, Homicide, Teenage