



Physical Anthropology Section - 2013

131 Sociodemographic Data of Intimate Partner Homicide-Suicide Cases in Turkish Mass Media Between 2008 – 2011 Through Judicial Records

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After attending this presentation, attendees will learn about intimate partner homicide-suicide cases in Turkey between 2008 – 2011.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by presenting information about intimate partner homicide-suicide cases in Turkey to point out some social and legal basis of problems.

The term "Homicide-Suicide" (HS) can be explained as "the committing of suicide by the same individual after he/she has committed a homicide." Some authors stated that the act can be defined as a homicide-suicide if the time period between homicide and suicide is less than 24 hours while other authors use a time period of a few days to one week. Other authors have used any time period in their definition. In order to evaluate the HS cases, different methods of classification are used by different authors according to psychopathological features of perpetrators, civil status of the relationship between victim and perpetrator, or the motivation of committing a homicide.

HS is most frequently seen among intimate partners and, within this scope, is an important part of sexual violence in society. Besides, violent features of these incidences mostly find a place in mass media. Thus, this study is planned to scientifically elicit the sociodemographic features of these mass media cases which have been constituting a good "image" of the general "picture" all around the country about Intimate Partner Homicide-Suicide (IPHS). Motivation of the perpetrator has also been included in the study as a sociodemographic factor. A media monitoring agency has been used with specific keywords to detect all the incidences of IPHS which had found a place in mass media between 2008 – 2011 in Turkey. The cases were then searched in the Turkish judicial system through the judicial archives of forensic medicine units, which are organized in the structure of the Council of Forensic Medicine, an unique official forensic medical expertise institution. The judicial records were evaluated in order to have the sociodemographic data of the victims and the perpetrators. The data collected were analyzed through descriptive statistics with SPSS 16.0 software, since it had been planned as a cross-sectional study.

As a result of the data analyses, 122 incidents of IPHS including 122 perpetrators and 157 victims in a time period of 48 months between January 1, 2008 and December 31, 2011 have been detected. Among victims, 35 were a third party instead of a spouse or intimate partner. Twenty-three among 35 were the mutual children of the couples constituted by the perpetrator and the victim. Ninety-seven point five percent of the IPHS perpetrators were male, showing that almost all of the sexual violence in mass media, in society, is against women instead of men. The mean age of the perpetrators was 41.54 (in the range 22 – 80 years) while the mean age of the victims was 35.56 (in the range 18 – 73 years). Also, 59.8% of the perpetrators and victims were found to be married officially during the incidences, while 52% were living separately during the incidences. The education level of 54.1% of the perpetrators were found to have a secondary school level of education. A psychiatric history was found in 7.4% (n=9) of the perpetrators, among whom only two were found to have a psychiatric diagnosis. The fact that 19 perpetrators had been committing violence to the victim before the homicide incidence was determined among 22 perpetrators for whom data related to the violence commitment status were able to be obtained. Also, 56 (45.9%) perpetrators were found to have exhibited behaviors of murder contemplation, while in 87 cases (71.3%), the time interval between the homicide and suicide was less than one hour. In addition, 89.5% of the perpetrators committed suicide using firearms while 88.6% of the victims had been murdered by firearms, all of which can also be parameters to discuss the motivation as a power ratio between the victim and the perpetrator, a violent drive-control ability, and other psychiatric basis.

The limited data can be found to be related to the past sociodemographic features, especially of IPHSs. In order to be able to obtain more data and documents, judicial units' recording more data will provide more of a chance, especially for psychiatric, sociological and criminal researches. Even with these numbers, this study can be the most comprehensive case collection in Turkey related to IPHS cases in mass media, providing some significant awareness for evaluation and prevention of further cases.

Homicide-Suicide, Intimate Partner, Sociodemographic