



W17 The Murder of Women: A Global Issue That Demands Action

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Learning Overview: After attending this presentation, attendees will understand and recognize how discrimination against women prevails throughout the world and how violence against women, a serious violation of human rights, is the most severe consequence of such discrimination. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights defined femicide as “the murder of women by gender” considering that these deaths result from structural and social attitudes, rooted in a culture of gender-based violence and discrimination. Acts of violence against women based on their status as women demand the serious and specific attention of the international community.

Impact on the Forensic Science Community: Attendees will become more aware of the various types of violence that are manifested in many ways. Most victims are raped and many are mutilated, tortured, or dismembered. Femicide is a complex phenomenon, ranging from the murder of women by their partners or ex-partners, to their kidnapping followed by rape and subsequent killing committed by unknown perpetrators, to ritual crimes performed by sects or other groups.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by empowering attendees to understand that is an obligation of the European Union, the United States, and the entire world to prevent and eradicate femicide and to adopt administrative, legislative, and judicial measures to prohibit gender discrimination. States must ensure the exercise of the rights of women and pursue, by all appropriate means and without delay, policies that prevent, punish, and eradicate violence against women. States have the obligation to standardize all their protocols and manuals; to update their research criteria; and to restructure the administration of justice related to investigate disappearances, sexual violence, and murder of women. These measures have implications not only for the United States, but also for other systems of human rights protection, such as the European Court of Human Rights. After implementation of various policies addressing this crucial issue, states should be held responsible for lack of diligence in investigations, lack of access to justice for the families of the victims, and, therefore, for the impunity of the perpetrators. To sum up, states are responsible for taking the necessary steps to ensure a life free of violence for women.

The study shows that is reasonable to create scientifically based monitoring with a proper strategy together with all national and international partners.¹⁻⁵ Such a structure must promote the creation of comparable national databases, while also systematically involving existing international systems of data collection and their experience. The database is designed to provide easy access to comprehensive and up-to-date information on measures undertaken by governments to address all forms of violence against women; increase opportunities for the exchange of experiences in addressing violence against women; strengthen the knowledge-base for effective policy responses to prevent and address violence against women; and encourage the further collection, availability, use and dissemination of data on violence against women, as well as analysis of such data.

Data are collected using a survey based on interviews of women who turn to support centers who were asked about their experiences of physical, sexual, and psychological violence, including incidents of intimate partner violence (“domestic violence”).

The research highlighted that the collection of police data alone would not be sufficient for analyzing the cases in the detail needed for prevention and intervention. Therefore, the strategy of collecting information on all the cases known to the media and collating it with the criminological data and, insofar as is possible, data recorded by health and support systems. All data together provide the opportunity to obtain more background information on femicides, which is important for future prevention and early interventions.

Reference(s):

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5. Organization of American States. *Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women*. Status of signatures and ratifications. July 2017.

Violence Against Women, Murder of Women, Femicide