

## I25 Uxoricide and Mental Disorder: A Retrospective and Descriptive Study of 30 Patients Hospitalized in a French Secure Unit Over a 22-Year Period

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**Learning Overview:** The goal of this presentation is to provide an analysis of the psycho-criminological profile of men suffering from psychiatric disease who attempted to kill or murdered their wives, also known as uxoricide.

**Impact on the Forensic Science Community:** This presentation will impact the forensic science community by improving the understanding of uxoricide in cases of mental disease.

**Background and Goal:** Uxoricide, or spousal homicide, is defined by the murder of a wife or ex-wife and in France has long been considered a crime of passion committed by husbands when wives were unfaithful. Currently, conjugal homicides are frequently discussed in scientific reviews as domestic violence. There is a lack of clinical data about offenders suffering from a serious mental disorder, as defined by Hodgins, as they are still regularly described in a dichotomy between paranoid disorder and melancholia disorder.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this present work is to identify the main characteristics of men with mental disease who kill their wives.

**Method:** The sociodemographic, clinical, and forensic characteristics of all men diagnosed with mental disease who committed an uxoricide and were admitted to the French Henri Colin secure unit between 1996 and 2018 (30 patients) were studied as was data about the victims. This is a retrospective and descriptive study.

**Results:** This study found a higher average age than other intra-family murderers (mean age of 36 years old), a lower level of education, and a lack of professional integration. Most subjects had a psychiatric history (76.67%); the main diagnosis was schizophrenia (46.67%), followed by paranoid disorder (26.67%), personality disorder (16.66%), and mood disorder (10%). A history of domestic violence was found in 40% of the cases and premeditation in 30% of the cases with two precipitating factors: a separation (real or fantasized) or a couples argument. The murder was most often perpetrated in the marital home, involved stabbing, and had no dissimulation of the wife's body. An alert had been raised by 20% of the victims before the murder. The analysis distinguishes two subgroups of motivational profiles. In the first group (73.33% of the cases), spousal murder occurred in a delusional context that could be favored by a break in psychotic medication or drug abuse. In the second group (20%), uxoricide happened in a dynamic of homicide-suicide.

**Conclusion:** The results of the present study on 30 mentally ill men who committed uxoricide were consistent with the literature on sociodemographic and forensic data, but not on clinical data. This study identified two psychopathological subgroups: a delusional context or a homicide-suicide dynamic. Biases in this study do not make it possible to provide a full generalization of those findings. Further studies are needed to better characterize this type of act.

### Reference(s):

<sup>1</sup>. Hodgins, Sheilagh, ed. *Mental Disorder and Crime*. Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1993.

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Uxoricide, Mental Illness, Forensic Psychiatry