

Homicidal Death: Patterns of Causes of Death on Post-Mortem Examination in Dhaka City

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Homicide is defined as killing of one human being by another. The present study was conducted to find out the patterns of causes of death in homicidal cases on post-mortem examination in Dhaka city. This descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted from January 2010 to January 2016. Autopsies of 3045 dead bodies were conducted in homicidal cases. The data were collected on a proforma from the records of forensic medicine department, Dhaka Medical College and Sir Salimullah Medical College with permission of authorities. The cases of death were determined by external, internal examination, histological examination, chemical analysis of viscera, partially decomposed, advanced decomposed or skeltonized bodies with no internal or external injuries sufficient to cause death and histological and toxicological reports failing to reveal any abnormal findings were included. Autopsies of 3045 dead bodies homicidal cases were performed out of the 2186 (71.79%) were males & 859 (28.29%) females. It was observed in this study that fire-arm injury was the commonest causes of death in 1370 (44.99%) cases, followed by blunt weapon injury in 667 (21.9%) cases. Homicidal deaths were mostly due to fire-arms in our-setup, strict measure should be taken to monitor and control the possession of illegal fire-arm.

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Key Words: Post-mortem, homicide, violence.

Introduction

Homicide is defined as the killing of one human being by another.¹ According to section 302 of Bangladesh Penal Code (BPC) unlawful killing of human being is murder.² Killing of an individual is the highest level of aggression found in all the cultures.³ The various pattern of homicidal deaths include assault by sharp weapon, blunt weapon, firearm, strangulation, homicidal hanging, smothering, drowning, burns, poisoning etc.⁴ Causes of homicidal death are increasing due to rapidly increasing population, urbanization, poverty

unemployment, frustration, illiteracy, prevalent economics social and political environment, insurgency, terrorism drug addiction, easy availability of weapon and the widening gap between the rich and the poor. If we look at the crimes in our society, it is clear that most of the crimes are the results of economic crisis of young offenders are becoming increasingly violent and this is a cause of concern as they are future generation. The aim of the present study was to know the pattern of cause of death in homicidal cases on autopsy in Dhaka.

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Methods

This descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted from January 2010 to January 2016. Autopsies of dead bodies were conducted in homicidal cases & included in this study. The data was collected on written proforma from the records of Forensic Medicine department, Dhaka Medical College and Sir Salimullah Medical College with permission of the authorities. Cases of deceased where cause of death was determined either by external and internal examination or by histological examination chemical analysis of viscera were included in this study. Partially decomposed, advanced decomposed or skeletonized bodies with no internal or external injuries sufficient to cause death and histological reports failing to reveal any abnormal findings were included in the study. Different variable of bodies. e.g.: sex & age were analyzed using Statically Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 13.

Results

Autopsies of 3045 dead bodies in homicidal cases were performed out of these 2186 (71.79%) were male & 859 (28.29%) were females. The gender & age distribution is given below in Table I. The data was collected from post-mortem report from 10 districts given below in Table II

Table I: Gender & Age distributions of victims with homicidal death (n=3045)

Variable	Number of cases	Percentage
Gender		
Male	2186	71.99%
Female	859	28.29%
Age (year)		
Up to 20	180	6.01%
21-30	945	32.23%
31-40	1140	38.51%
41-50	455	16.03%
51-60	185	6.90%
Above 60	140	0.31%

Table II: District location of victims with homicidal death (n= 3045)

Sl. No.	District	Cases	Percentages
1.	Dhaka	915	30.04%
2.	Narayanganj	557	18.29%
3.	Gopalganj	490	16.09%
4.	Munshigonj	295	9.68%
5.	Madaripur	215	7.06%
6.	Manikgonj	200	6.56%
7.	Jamalpur	115	3.77%
8.	Rajbari	100	3.28%
9.	Kishorgonj	98	3.21%
10.	Shariatpur	60	1.97%

It was observed in this study that fire-arm injury was the commonest cause of death in 1370 (44.99%) cases. All other cases as depicted in Table III.

Table III: Causes of Homicidal death (n = 3045)

Sl. No.	Cases	Number of cases	Percentage
1.	Fire-arm	1370	44.99%
2.	Blunt Weapon	667	21.90%
3.	Burning	420	13.79%
4.	Target Killing	94	3.08%
5.	Petrol Bomb	80	2.62%
6.	Sharp Weapon	73	2.39%
7.	Asphyxia	68	2.23%
8.	Drowning	65	2.13%
9.	Poisoning	53	1.74%
10.	Electrocution	38	1.24%
11.	Rape	36	1.18%
12.	Undetermined	81	2.66%

Discussion

In this study of more than 7 years duration cases of homicidal or autopsies belonged to district Dhaka 30.04%,Gopalganj 16.09%, Munshigonj 9.68%, Madaripur 7.06%, Manikgonj 6.56%, Jamalpur 3.77%,Rajbari3.28%,Kishorgonj3.21%,Sharia tpur1.97%. The age range of victims of homicide in this study was maximum at 21-30 and 31-40 years 32.23% cases and 38.51% cases as this age group persons are more

mobile and are putting themselves more to violence. The number of victims of homicide in males were 71.79% as compared to female victims 28.29% which was 2/3 as compared to female victims, as females are less exposed to violence in our country due to cultural & religious reasons. The victims of homicide due to fire-arm were maximum. In New Mexico USA, a study suggested that homicide prevention efforts should be directed against non-firearm methods as the firearm use was very low.⁵ In a study conducted in Georgia USA the homicide rate was 48% and firearm was used in 88% of cases over 20 years period.⁶ Although a high rate of firearm use was found in this study but the rate of homicide is still very low compared to our situation. There were 2.62% cases of petrol bomb in our study. As the casualties on petrol bomb are very high in number so every victim is not subjected to autopsy. There were of target killing. It was seen that the victims of blunt trauma were. Use of sharp weapons, blunt trauma and asphyxia deaths were very low and this trend was seen in many others study in Bangladesh. However, the indigence of blunt trauma injuries & deaths due to sharp weapons higher in UK.⁷ There were 2.23% cases of asphyxia, 2.39% by sharp weapon, and 2.13% cases of drowning. In our country, there is also trend of homicidal electrocution as reported in this study there were 1.24% cases of electrocution. Some homicidal poisoning tendency is also seen which was reflected by 1.18% cases in this study. There were also homicidal burning deaths seen on autopsy as we recorded 13.79% cases on autopsy. In this study cases of rape following murder is recorded. In this study in 2.66% cases the causes of death could not be

undetermined due to advanced putrefaction which correlates with other similar studies conducted in Bangladesh.

Conclusion

Homicidal death due to firearms have increased substantially strict measures should be taken to monitor and control the possession of illegal fire arms. Law and order situation needs to be improved in the country.

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