

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Pattern of Homicidal Death among the Post-Mortem Cases in a Metropolitan City of Bangladesh

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Abstract:

Homicide means killing one human being by another human. It is a global problem and has significant consequence for both social and economic security of the people as well as national development. This study was aimed to describe patterns of the homicidal behavior in a major metropolitan area, Dhaka city and the relationships among socio-demographic characteristics. This was a cross-sectional study during the period of July 2017 to June 2018 in the Department of Forensic Medicine, Dhaka Medical College. A total number of 935 cases were autopsied during the period, of which 319 cases were included in the study as homicidal death. All the inquest reports and the challan were read through along with post-mortem reports during the study period. The data were collected during the autopsy as well as from the registration books (Govt. records.) in the department of Forensic Medicine, Dhaka Medical College. Out of 319 homicidal death, 227 cases were above the age of 30 years (71.15 % of the total cases), 233 cases were male (73.04 %) and 86 were female (26.95 %) whereas considering religion, the majority were Muslim 287 in number (89.20%) and the rest were other religion. According to the types of wound, 198 cases were stab and cut-throat, 81 cases were strangulation, 32 cases were firearm injury & the 08 cases were suffocated. The majority of deceased resulting from stab and cut-throat injuries and those were above 30 years of age group. The most of homicidal death occurred among the young age group which is very alarming to the society and for the nation. So, we should be aware enough to prevent such cases.

Keywords: Homicide, Strangulation, Suffocation, Postmortem.

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Introduction:

The WHO defines homicide as death by injury purposely inflicted by others. It may be lawful (justifiable and excusable) or unlawful (murder, culpable and rash)¹. Justifiable homicide term applies to judicial execution of death sentence permitted by the law of different countries of the

world after the trial in the court².

The excusable homicide caused unintentionally by an act done in good faith. This includes, killing for self-defense when attacked, provided there is no other means of defense,

causing homicide due to accident or misadventure, death following a lawful operation, homicide committed by an insane person³.

In 2012, almost half a million people (437,000) across the world died due to unlawful homicide. Around the globe, 79% of all homicide victims were male and 21% were female. The average homicide rate is at 9.7 per 100,000 males and 2.7 per 100,000 females globally⁴.

In 2018, homicide rate for Bangladesh was 2.4 cases per 100,000 population. Though, in Bangladesh homicide rate of both sexes fluctuated substantially in recent years, it tended to decrease through 2004 - 2018 period ending at 2.37 cases per 100,000 population around 3,830 in 2018⁵.

Homicidal cut throat is regularly found on both side of the neck at or underneath the level of thyroid cartilage. The course of the wound is transverse or from underneath upwards. A beveling cut can be seen and the edges are sharp and clean-cut. Hesitation cut and tailing are usually absent. The seriousness of the damage is indeed grater⁶.

Strangulation represents an important form of blunt neck trauma requires an understanding of various maneuver used for termination of life. Passing by ligature strangulation or garroting including the choking of the neck by a ligature pulled that's tight by constrain other than the victim's body weight. Throttling or manual strangulation is the compression of neck with human hands. Chokehold are maneuver initially planned to initially permit law requirement officer to repress rough hoodlums. The "Carotid Sleeper" involves compression of the neck within the twist of the elbow and the "bar arm" move utilize unbending lower arm for compression⁷.

The wounds of the firearms are either penetrating or perforating. The pellets and bullets could often be detected within the body of the deceased during the penetrating wound. The characteristics of the firearm's injury and description depend on the form and quality of the weapon's action⁸.

The suffocation could be a common term to indicate that form of asphyxia where respiratory exchange is

obstructed without pressure to the neck or drowning. Smothering, gagging, overlying, choking & traumatic asphyxia the different form of suffocation⁹.

Materials and method:

This record based cross-sectional study of postmortem cases was performed at the morgue of the department of Forensic Medicine, Dhaka Medical College (DMC), Dhaka during the period of July, 2017 to June, 2018. Most of the victims were brought to DMC morgue from all over the Dhaka city as 35 police stations is under the Dhaka city. A total number of 935 postmortem cases were done during the period. All the inquest reports and the challan were read through along with those postmortem reports during the study period. All the data were collected in a predefined data collection sheet from post mortem registers (Govt. records) and reports. Then, statistical analyses were performed by using the computer software SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) 21.0 and were expressed in frequency and percentage.

Results:

A total of 935 cases were autopsied during the study period in Dhaka Medical College morgue, of which 319 cases were homicidal death. In this study, the maximum homicidal death occurred during the period of January, 2018 to March, 2018. Out of 319 cases, most of them 227 (71.15%) were of 30 years and above. Among the 319 homicidal death, 73.04% were male and 26.95% were female.

Table I: Distribution of postmortem cases of Homicidal death

Month	No. of Post mortem	No. of Homicide	Percentage (%)
July 2017	65	21	6.58
August 2017	72	25	7.83
September 2017	76	28	8.77
October 2017	109	26	8.15
November 2017	91	19	5.95
December 2017	97	24	7.52
January 2018	73	29	9.09
February 2018	77	34	10.65
March 2018	71	28	8.77
April 2018	64	27	8.46
May 2018	66	28	8.77
June 2018	74	30	9.40
Total	935	319	100

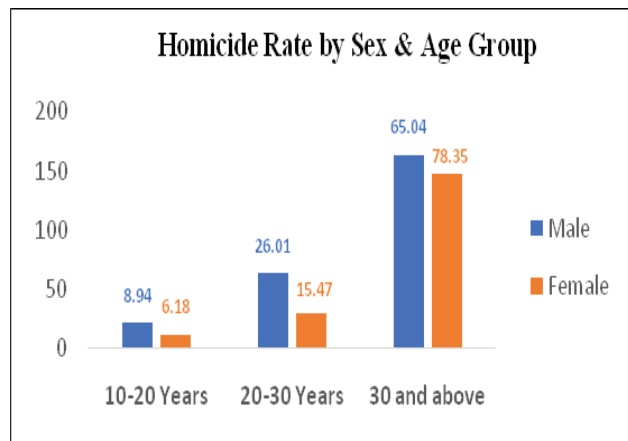


Figure 1: Rate of Homicide according to the sex and age group

The majority of those homicidal death, 284 (89.09%) occurred among the Muslim people.

Table II: Distribution of post mortem cases of Homicide according to the method of Homicide

Method.	Number of cases	Percentage (%)
Stab & Cut throat	187	58.62
Strangulation	81	25.39
Fire-arms injuries	32	10.03
Suffocation	08	2.50
Total	319	100

Discussion:

There are much of thoughtful, high quality and revolutionary research on crime (e.g.homicide) seasonality for more than a century throughout the world. Amongst them, much of the research on crime seasonality over the past 25 years revealed the climatic conditions responsible for observed crime fluctuations across weeks, months, or quarters of the year. Researchers have explored the influence of temperature, humidity, hours of sunlight, level of precipitation and other climatic conditions such as wind and barometric pressure on within-year variations in crime rates¹⁰. Similarly, in this study, it was found that these variations of homicidal frequency in different part of the study year.

Gender relationships have also played a role in

homicide. The study revealed a greater number of males were victim than the women which is near similar with the usual global pattern of sex and agegroup.

Interestingly, conventional religious beliefs were common among the Muslims of the study group. Typically, heterogenous community of Muslims or Hindus are living widespread in Bangladesh. Being majority of the people in the country, So, the rate of homicide recorded were large in Muslims in this study¹⁷.

It was observed that hypovolemic and neurogenic shock due to stab or cut throat injury was the mostcommon mode ofhomicidal death in this study i.e. 187 homicidal cases (58.62 %) and cause of death was stab and cut throat wound.This finding was similar to the findings by the authors in new Delhi, India¹⁸. This trend was followed byasphyxia in 81 cases (25.39%) following strangulation, not in consistence with the study by other researchers¹⁹.

32 cases (10.03%) were related directly to the damage of thevital organs (brain, heart andlung) following firearm injury or suffocation. Researchers found anterior chestas the frequent site of injury, elaborated by common use offirearms²⁰. The time of death whether before or after the arrival in the vicinity of morgue was lacked in the records that were evaluated. So, vital organ involvement was somewhat to happen. Male-female variations of mode of homicide or cause of death were not ascertained in this study.

Conclusion:

The most of homicidal death occurred among the young agedmale persons.There are variations in the courses of homicide fromcountry to country, region to region and from time to time. This study is among the very few researche sheld in Bangladesh tailing the use of multilevel analytical skills. Homicidal death rate is very alarming and sensitive to the society and the nation. This study may serve as an eye opener for the legislative, policy makers and all well alert citizens of the country. Dealing towards such direction of prevention of the underlined cases, which plays a vital role for homicide.

More coordinated multicenter study can further reveal the whole country's true picture.

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