

FP – 21

A PRELIMINARY STUDY ON FEMALE HOMICIDES FROM FIVE PROVINCES IN SRI LANKA

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Introduction

In a multicultural society like Sri Lanka, despite the deep rooted gender perceptions and assumptions towards females, homicide of a female is condemned far greater than a male. Although relationships and family values play a major role in the etiology for homicides, the life of the family are often changed irrevocably by these tragedies.

Objectives

To determine the association between ages, demography, etiology, of the female victims of homicide and the time taken to initiate judicial process.

Methodology

A retrospective descriptive study on alleged female homicides in five provinces, namely, Western, Southern, Eastern, Sabaragamuwa and North Central was conducted using police records and postmortem reports for a period of four years (2013-2016) following approval from relevant stake holders. Data was obtained according to a pro-forma employing convenient sampling method.

Results

Out of 252 female homicides studied 12% were less than 20 years old while 24% were more than 60. There were 54% house wives while professionals accounted for 3%. 59% were married. The majority (60%) were from rural areas. The alleged perpetrator was a known person in 83% while 35% was the husband or ex-lover. The reasons for the death were family disputes in 27% while extra-marital affair/love affair/problems related to sex/sexuality were 23% followed by robbery in 10%. The commonest injury type was sharp force trauma (40%) while rape and murder amounted to 8%. Intimate partner violence was recorded in 15%. The analysis of the judicial process revealed that non-summary-inquiry and the Attorney General Department decision to start High Courts take about 4-5 years.

Conclusion

Female homicides are mainly linked to issues with relationships. Although some cannot be prevented murders due to family disputes, extra marital affairs/ love affairs can be reduced by strengthening family relationships through improving mental-health services/counselling. Delays in the court procedure warrants in depths analysis as well as a dialog among stake holders to overcome the issue.