

An Analysis of Trends of Homicidal Deaths in Western Mumbai Region

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Abstract

Background: The present study conducted for evaluation of trends in homicidal deaths with references to study the specific parameters of homicidal deaths like incidence of homicide, socio-demographic profile of victims and type of weapon used for homicide in western Mumbai region over the period of two years.

Method: Study was conducted in department of forensic medicine of H. B. T. Medical College & Cooper Hospital, Mumbai for period of 2 years from January 2015 to December 2016. Total 3114 of autopsies were conducted during the period of which 66 (2.11%) were of homicidal deaths.

Result: Present study found homicidal deaths accounted for 2.11% of autopsies conducted in study period. Predominance of male victims (54.5%) seen over female victims (45.5%). Maximum number of victims of homicide were in the age group of 21-40 years (60.6%). Most of homicides took place at victim's residence 45.45%. Arguments (45.45%) were found to be most common motive behind homicide. Hard and blunt weapon (39.4%) is commonest type of weapon used.

Conclusion: The trends of homicides are varying from region to region. In most of cases the victims are well acquainted with accused and most common place of crime was victims own house all these findings indicated that homicides were as result of arguments and scuffle between them. The victims in this young age group are more aggressive and less tolerant, proper anger and stress management through the psychiatry counselling of this age group may lower homicide rate.

Key words: homicide, autopsy, arguments, hard and blunt weapon.

Introduction

Homicide is the killing of human being by another human being. There are two types of homicides i) lawful which includes excusable and justifiable homicide ii) unlawful or culpable homicide (sec.229 of IPC) which includes culpable homicide amounting to murder (300 of IPC) and culpable homicide not amounting to murder (304 of IPC).¹ To constitute the offense of murder the two elements are i.e. Mens rea means guilty

mind or preplanning with afore thought and actus reus means actual execution of planning are essential. While in offense of culpable homicide not amounting to murder the first component of preplanning i.e. mens rea is absent. The offense of culpable homicide not amounting to murder is often committed by sudden and grave provocation during the scuffle or arguments.²

The Mumbai western suburbs have population approximately 6.2 million. There are various offenses affecting the body like rape, attempt to murder, grievous hurt, abetment of suicide, kidnapping etc. of which homicide is most heinous crime against the body known to mankind right from old civilisation to present day. It has grave implication on society. The detection and separation of such offender from society is matter of

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vital importance for maintaining safety and security in the entire society. The identification of profile of risk factors of victim of homicide may prevent or reduce the rate of homicide. Therefore, this study was conducted to evaluate the incidence and trends of committing homicides for the cases which are brought to autopsies at department of forensic medicine at H. B. T. College, Mumbai for period of two-year 2015 and 2016.

Material and Method

The present prospective study is conducted in the department of forensic medicine and toxicology at H.B.T. medical college for the period of two years i.e. 1st January 2015 to 31st December 2016. The data includes cases of homicide referred for post mortem by police station from western Mumbai (western suburbs) region which comes under the jurisdiction of H. B. T. medical college.

Inclusion criterion:

1. All case investigated by investing officer under 302 of IPC.
2. The cases with no history of homicide at the time of death but turned to be homicide after autopsy.

Exclusion criterion:

1. Cases of infanticides.
2. Custodial (judicial and police) homicides.

The proforma was prepared with different parameter used in study like age, sex, occupation marital status, place of incidence, survival period, motive, accused – victim relation and weapon of offense. The information about the socio-demographic profile of cases was obtained from police inquest, ADR forms, statement of relatives of victims, hospital papers and history obtained from relative, friends accompanying with deceased person. Details of crime scene are obtained from crime scene visit or photographs of crime scene.

Result /Observation

Table 1: Total number of autopsy and its relation to homicide autopsies

Period	Total autopsies	Homicidal autopsies (%)
Jan 2015- Dec 2015	1524	35(2.3)
Jan 2016- Dec 2016	1590	31(1.9)
Total	3114	66(2.11)

Total 3114 autopsies were conducted in period of 2-year Jan 2015- Dec. 2016 out of which total 66 (2.11%) cases were of homicide.

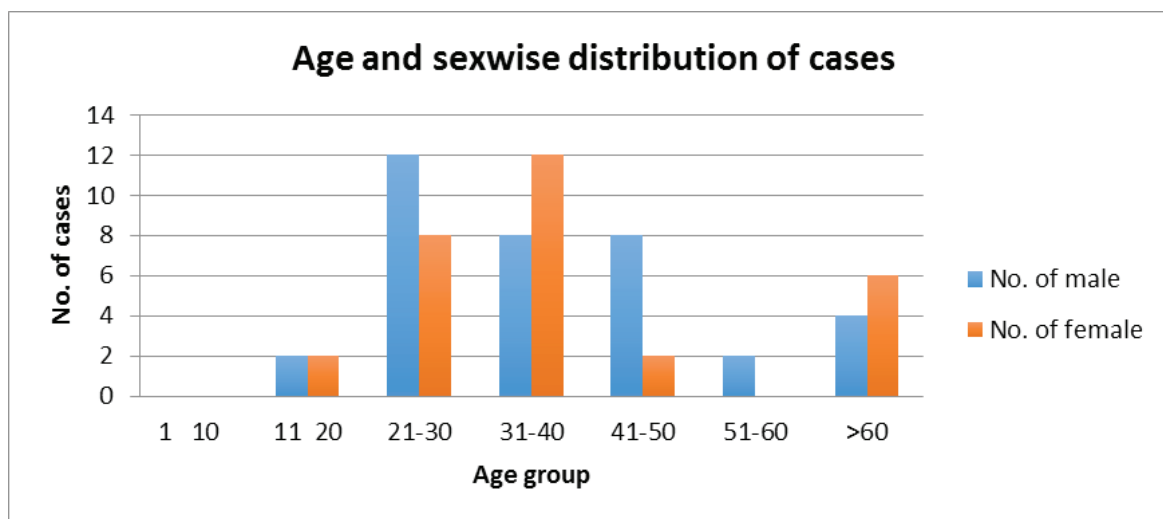


Chart 1: Distribution of victims according to the age and sex.

The study reveals the predominance of male victims 36(54.5%) over female victims which account for 30 cases (45.5%). Maximum and same number of victims each 20 cases (30.30%) were found in the age group of 21-30 and 31-40. Victims less than age of 1 year (infanticide) is excluded from study. No case of homicide is reported in age group of 1-10 years. 60.6% homicides were occurred in age group 21-40 years, however least numbers of victims were in the age group of 51-60 years 2 (03.03%).

Table 2: Socio-Demographic profile of victims

Occupation	Number of cases	Percentage
Student	6	09.09
Housewife	12	18.18
Labourer	8	12.12
Salaried/job	16	24.24
Own business	13	19.69
Acting	4	06.06
Retired	7	10.60
Marital status		
Married	41	62.12
Unmarried	19	28.78
Divorcee	2	03.03
Widow/widower	4	06.06
Place of incidence		
Victims house	30	45.45
Assailant house	10	15.15
Remote place	12	18.18
Work place	8	12.12
Street	6	09.09

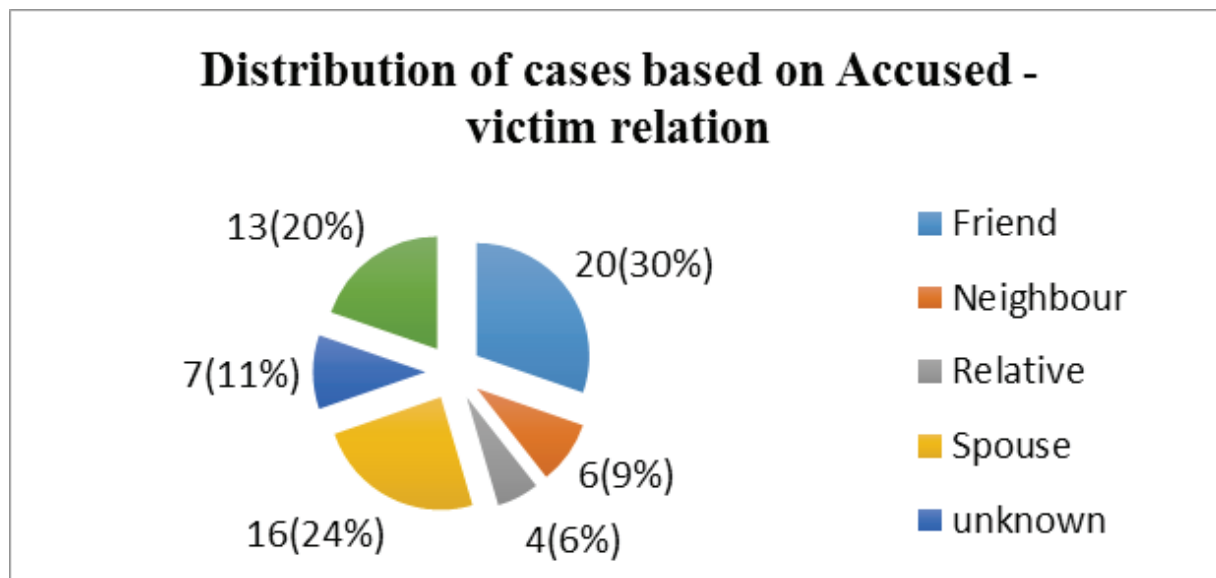
It was observed that most of victims 16 (24.24%) belongs to occupation of salaried /job either in government or private sectors followed by victims with own business 13 (19.69%). Housewives accounts for 18.18% cases.

Majority of victims of homicides were married and accounts for 62.12% (41) cases. Unmarried victims

accounts for 28.78% cases. Widows/widower accounts for 6.06% cases and divorcee accounts for 3.03% cases.

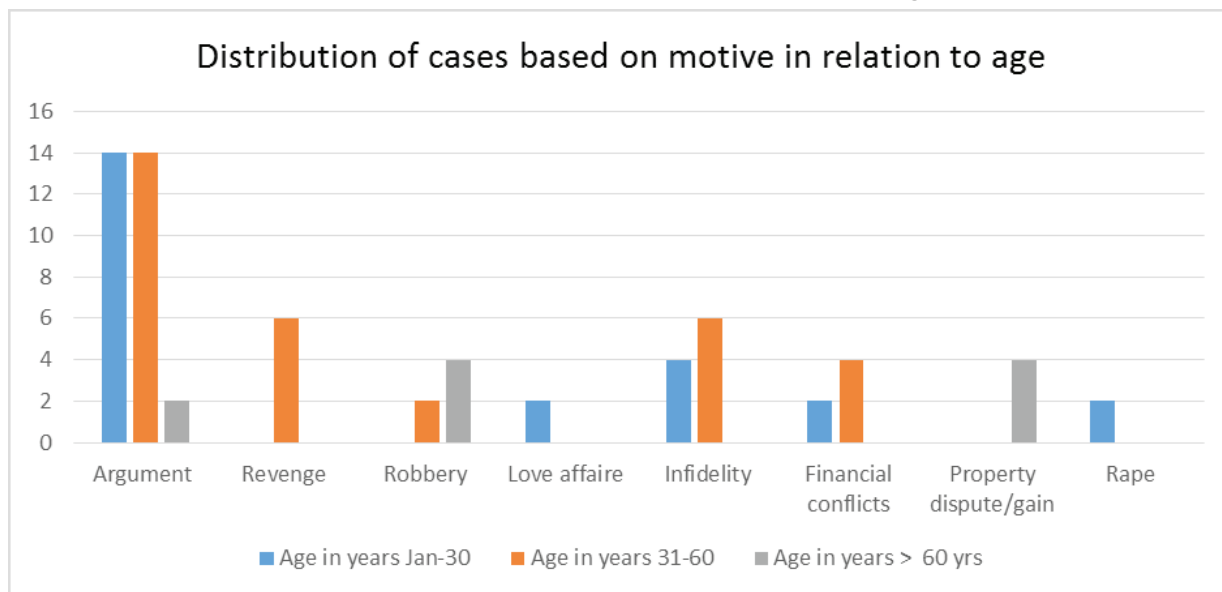
The commonest place for the homicide observed was victims own house 30 (45.45%) followed by remote place 12 (18.18%) and assistant house 10 (15.15%).

Chart 2: Distribution of homicide according to accused victim relation.



It was observed that in majority of cases accused was friend 20(30%) followed by spouse 16(24%) of victim. Relative 4(6%) of victims were found in least cases.

Chart 3: Motive wise distribution of victims in relation to age:



Arguments were most common motive behind the homicide, followed by Revenge, robbery, and financial conflicts which constitutes 9.09% each. Argument is most common motive in young age group (1-30 years) which comprises of almost 58.33% of cases. However, the robbery and property gain were comprising of 40% of cases each in old age group (>60 years)

Table 3: Type of weapons used in cases

Sr. No.	Type of weapon	No. of cases	Percentage
1	Sharpe edged	24	36.36
2	Hard and blunt	26	39.39
3	blunt weapon + Sharp	2	3.03
4	Ligature material	10	15.15
6	Ligature + manual Strangulation	2	3.03
7	Thermal burn	2	3.03
8	Total	66	100

Hard and blunt weapon is most commonly used weapon of offense and observed in 39.39% cases, followed by sharp edged weapon in 36.36% of cases. In 3.035 cases both sharp edged and blunt weapon was used.

Discussion

During the study period total 3114 autopsies were conducted of which 66 were of homicide accounting 2.11% of total autopsy done over period of two year i.e. Jan 2015 to Dec 2016. Findings of our study were consistent with study of Shailesh Jhaveri, Sandip Raloti et.al study 2.31% in the city of Surat³, Dhaval J. Parmar, Love R. Bhagora et.al 2.4%. In Bhvanagar city 4 and some extent to study of Prashanth Mada, P. Hari Krishna where homicide comprises of 3.24% of total autopsies in Hyderabad region⁵, study of Dr. Basappa S. Hugar, Dr. Girish Chandra Y P et.al 4.32% conducted in Bangalore region.⁶ However findings are in contrast with Sachidananda Mohanty, Sujan Kumar Mohanty et.al. study where homicides constitute 6.9% of homicides⁷, B. C. Shivakumar study 4.76%⁸ and Ashok K. Rastogi study 4.25%.⁹ These differences are due to variation in geographical and development of different region of India. Percentages of homicides are more in southern region in comparison of western region of India.

Our study shows predominance of male victims (54.5%) which is consistent with Sandip Raloti³, Dr. Basappa S. Hugar⁶, Dhaval J. Parmar⁴, B. C. Shivakumar study⁸ Prashanth Mada⁵ Sachidananda Mohanty⁷ and Ashok K. Rastogi study.⁹

The most important finding of the study is the commonly affected age group of victims, 21-30, 31-40

years and each contributes for 30.30% of cases which together comprises for 60.60% cases. Findings of our study Correlates with other studies such as, Sandip Raloti³, Dhaval J. Parmar⁴, Prashanth Mada⁵, Dr. Basappa S. Hugar⁶, Sachidananda Mohanty⁷, B. C. Shivakumar study⁸ and Ashok K. Rastogi study⁹. In all these studies there is predominance of victims of age group 21-40 which comprises of more than 60% of cases. The high incidence of cases in the age group of 21-40 may be due to person in this age group are more aggressive, short tempered and least tolerant which leads to arguments and scuffle and ultimately end to crime of homicide. The study shows overall predominance of male victims which is consistent with study of Sandip Raloti, Prashanth Mada⁵ Basappa S. Hugar⁶, Sachidananda Mohanty⁷, Dhiraj Buchade¹⁰.

Present study reveals the most common place of occurrence of homicidal attack was the victims own house 45.45% which indicates that most of homicides accused and victims were closely related with easy access to victim's home. The victims and accused were well acquainted with each other. The findings were similar to study of Prashanth Mada⁵ and Dr. Basappa S. Hugar⁶. Argument and scuffles between accused and victims was the most common motive found in this study (45.45%). The most common motive of homicides scuffle and arguments indicates that homicides were not predetermined and planned. The arguments and scuffle with sudden and grave provocation leading

to death of victims. The findings were consistent with study of Prashanth Mada⁵, Ashok K. Rastogi⁹, However, inconsistent with study Basappa S. Hugar⁶, Sachidananda Mohanty⁷ and B. C. Shivakumar study⁸ which reveals the enmity /revenge as common motive behind the homicide.

The present study found commonest type of weapon used in homicides was hard and blunt weapon (39.39%). The findings were consistent with study of Prashanth Mada⁵, Ashok K. Rastogi⁹ 31.7%⁹ Dhiraj Buchade et.al 37.2%¹⁰. Where common weapon of choice was hard and blunt weapon. Use of only hard and blunt weapons for homicide could possibly be unpremeditated/unplanned aggressive/ explosive response of person to sudden and grave provocation in arguments primarily. These hard and blunt objects were easily available. The findings were contrast with Dhaval J. Parmar et.al.⁴, Basappa S. Hugar⁶, Sachidananda Mohanty⁷, and B. C. Shivakumar⁸ where the common weapon of choice was sharp and pointed weapon. However, the studies of Basappa S. Hugar⁶ Sachidananda Mohanty⁷ and B. C. Shivakumar⁸ also shows contrast in motive of homicide which was revenge/enmity. Exclusive use of sharp-edged weapon observed in (36.36%) homicidal cases. The use of only sharp-edged weapon points towards premeditated/planned crimes with motive of robbery, revenge or property dispute.

Conclusions

The trends of homicides are varying from region to region. The social and demographic factors are affecting the crime of homicide.

Most common age group involved in homicide was 21-40 years 60.60%, the victims are well acquainted with accused and most common place of crime was victims own house all these findings indicated that homicides were as result of arguments and scuffle between them. The victims in this young age group are more aggressive and less tolerant, proper anger and stress management through the psychiatry counselling of this age group may lower homicide rate.

The sharp and pointed weapon was used as weapon of choices in planned homicide with motive of revenge or robbery. However hard and blunt weapon was used as weapon of choice in unplanned/ unpremeditated homicides as easy availability of these weapons.

Ethical Clearance- Taken from institutional ethics committee at H. B. T. Medical College Mumbai.

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Conflict of Interest- Nil

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