



## DYADIC DEATHS: A STUDY FROM YEAR 2000 - 2015 IN NAGPUR REGION OF MAHARASHTRA, INDIA

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Article Received on 02/06/2015

Article Revised on 23/06/2015

Article Accepted on 14/07/2015

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### ABSTRACT

Dyadic deaths have got important social impact. The aim of this study was to identify the type of perpetrator and victim, method of homicide – suicide and factors responsible for committing homicide – suicide. In the present study, total 10 cases of dyadic deaths (Homicide – Suicide) were studied. The assailants and victims were family members in most cases. The major factors responsible for dyadic episodes were domestic quarrel, financial stress, rejection in love and suspecting infidelity.

**KEYWORDS:** Homicide – Suicide, Dyadic death, Spousal killing, Domestic quarrel.

### INTRODUCTION

**Homicide – Suicide, Murder – Suicide and Dyadic Deaths** all refer to an incident where a homicide is committed followed by the assailant's suicide almost immediately or soon after homicide. It is one of the most tragic forms of violence and although infrequent provokes family disruption, psychological trauma and public concern.<sup>[1]</sup> Dyadic deaths are relatively rare when compared to separate incidence of homicide – suicide worldwide and related to demographic profiles of population. In India, National Crime Records Bureau hasn't given information regarding incidences of dyadic deaths. But such deaths are not infrequent in society as evident from various case reports and media news.<sup>[2-6]</sup> Murder – suicide tends to involve people who know each other, closer the relationship between offender and victim, greater the likelihood that the perpetrator will suicide.<sup>[7]</sup> The characteristic feature in all

Murder – Suicide deaths is a family relationship or close intimate bond between victim/s and assailants.

### Method

The present study was carried out in the department of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology at Indira Gandhi Govt. Medical College, Nagpur between 2000 & 2015. The cases which met the criteria for dyadic deaths were studied. The deaths were categorized into four types according to the reasons

- 1) Domestic quarrel
- 2) Financial stress
- 3) Rejection in love
- 4) Doubting infidelity.

### RESULTS

**Table 1 Age and sex distribution of the perpetrator**

Case No.	Age (years)	Sex
1	30	M
2	32	M
3	38	M
4	24	F
5	45	M
6	39	M
7	25	M
8	22	M
9	21	M
10	28	M

**Table 2 Age and sex distribution of the victim**

Case No.	Age (years)	Sex
1	03	M
	10 months	F
2	27	F
	02	F
3	08	M
	06	M
4	02	F
	02	F
5	14	F
	07	F
6	34	F
	03	F
7	21	F

8	19	F
9	19	F
10	04	M
	02	M

**Table 3 Relationship of perpetrator with the victim and reason for causation of death**

Case No.	Perpetrator	Victim	Reasons for causation of death
1	Father	Son	Domestic Quarrel
	Father	Daughter	
2	Husband	Wife	Domestic Quarrel
	Father	Daughter	
3	Father	Son	Domestic Quarrel
	Father	Son	
4	Mother	Daughter	Domestic Quarrel
	Mother	Daughter	
5	Father	Daughter	Financial stress
	Father	Daughter	
6	Husband	Wife	Financial stress
	Father	Daughter	
7	Husband	Wife	Financial stress
8	Boyfriend	Girlfriend	Failure in love affair
9	Boyfriend	Girlfriend	Failure in love affair
10	Father	Son	Doubting infidelity
	Father	Son	

**Table 4. Method of causation of deaths of the victim and perpetrator**

Case No.	Perpetrator	Method of causation of death	Victim	Method of causation of death
1	Father	Drowning	Son	Drowning
	Father		Daughter	Drowning
2	Husband	Firearm injury	Wife	Hanging
	Father		Daughter	Strangulation
3	Father	Drowning	Son	Drowning
	Father		Son	Drowning
4	Mother	Burns	Daughter	Burns
	Mother		Daughter	Burns
5	Father	Hanging	Daughter	Strangulation
	Father		Daughter	Strangulation
6	Husband	Stab injuries	Wife	Stab injuries
	Father		Daughter	Stab injuries
7	Husband	Hanging	Wife	Strangulation
8	Boyfriend	Hanging	Girlfriend	Cut throat
9	Boyfriend	Crush injuries	Girlfriend	Stab injuries
10	Father	Crush injuries	Son	Stab injuries
	Father		Son	Stab injuries

Out of the total 22532 medico-legal autopsy cases only 10 cases were found to be fulfilling the criteria for dyadic deaths. Hence they are briefly mentioned as follows-

### **Domestic Quarrel**

**Case I:** Drunkard perpetrator immediately committed suicide in the same well after throwing his 3 year son & 10 month's daughter. The assailant committed the crime in fit of anger as wife denied to give money for liquor.

**Case II:** A security person committed suicide by shooting with service rifle after strangulating 2 year daughter and hanging wife.

**Case III:** Father committed suicide after throwing 6 year son & 8 year daughter in the same well.

**Case IV:** A short tempered young mother fade up of repeated quarrel with husband set ablazed with her 2 years twin daughters.

### **Financial stress**

**Case V:** Disillusioned with life and its cruel demands, a widower committed suicide by hanging after strangulating 7 & 14 year daughter.

**Case VI:** A perpetrator ended life by self stabbing after killing daughter and wife by kitchen knife.

**Case VII:** Unemployed husband committed suicide by hanging after strangulating wife.

### **Rejection in love**

**Case VIII:** A young tenant committed suicide by hanging after slitting throat of 19 year girl who refused to marry him.

**Case IX:** One sided love story resulted in brutal killing of young girl publicly by young perpetrator who committed suicide by jumping in front of train.

### **Doubting infidelity**

Case X: Husband stabbed his wife and two sons of age 2 & 4 years to death doubting infidelity. The perpetrator attempted suicide by self stabbing was hospitalised. The accused fled from hospital and committed suicide by jumping before a running train.

Table no 1 show that most of the perpetrators of dyadic deaths were male of relatively younger age group. Similarly most of the victims of dyadic deaths were either female of relatively younger age group or a girl child of <5 years age. (Table 2).

Table 3 show the relationship of perpetrator with the victim. It can be observed that in most of the cases the perpetrator was either the husband or father or both of the victims. Barring one case of female perpetrator all the others were males. Also in the most of these cases domestic quarrel was an important factor other than financial stress.

Table 4 show, that the most common method of causation of deaths to victims was stab injuries followed by drowning. Similarly in the perpetrators most common method for causation of death was hanging followed by drowning and crush injuries.

## DISCUSSION

Suicide preceded by homicide is a rare but tragic event that often shocks the whole society. Men commits the vast majority of homicide – suicide where in a person kills their intimate partner or family members before killing himself. In this study male was offender in 9 cases and female in only one case. The commonest reason for homicide – suicide episodes was domestic quarrel (Case I, II, III, IV). The reason for homicide – suicide was breakdown of relationship (46%), the victim usually being spouse, mental illness (21%), physical ill health(11%), and financial stress (10%).<sup>[8]</sup>

Oklahoma study<sup>[9]</sup> determined that 9.6% of murder – suicide perpetrator had history of domestic violence.

Mother perpetrator committed homicide – suicide (Case IV) as she was unable to bear with the burden of life involving psychological stress due to repeated domestic quarrel.

Financial burden, future and security of daughters (Case V) resulted in homicide – suicide. The action of killing the children is an extension of suicide and that the perpetrator is acting altruistically to save children from the danger of the world.

Familial murder – suicide often involve a parent who murders their children and then commits suicide (Case I, III, IV, V).

In the New Hampshire study 54% had history of domestic violence. Stressful life events may be contributory factors with cases occurring when there have been financial and work related problems including loss of employment .Marital discord with feelings of rejection may play a role in spousal and familial murder – suicide.<sup>[10]</sup>

Marzuk et al.<sup>[11]</sup> (1992) discussed the phenomenon of familicide – suicide. These episodes typically involve the senior male of the family killing his entire family. They recorded that the men is usually depressed, paranoid or intoxicated.(case II, VI,VII,X)

The degree of violence exhibited by these individuals has led to the term family annihilators.<sup>[12]</sup>

Graser identified a number of precipitating factors in perpetrators of familicide, including marital and financial problems, unemployment, depression and social isolation, alcohol abuse, physical and mental illness and particularly in murder – suicide type of family murder, stated that victim precipitation in the form of behaviour of spouse often provides a trigger for family murder. The personalities of perpetrators and their victims, the prevailing circumstances and the manner in which latter are defined, interact, possibly ending in tragedy.<sup>[13]</sup>

Investigation revealed termination of love affair and rejected demand of marriage resulted consort killing on the day of her engagement. (Case VIII). Spousal murder – suicides typically involve a male spouse or love who suffers morbid jealousy or jealous rage precipitated by frustration.<sup>[14]</sup>

Boyfriend brutally killed girl when she turned down the love proposal (Case IX). Unequited love or one side love that is not openly reciprocated or understood as such by the beloved. The beloved may not aware of the admirer`s deep and strong romantic affection or consciously reject it.<sup>[15]</sup>

Spousal homicide along with children is commonly seen as a result of husband accusing the wife of sexual infidelity. The infidelity may be real, delusional or imagined. Delusional of infidelity is often the cause of marital stress and can leads to acts of hostility, aggression, stalking and violence. Spousal killing occurred as a result of conflict over extramarital, sexual and love affairs. Jealousy appears to be the leading homicide motive in many studies often cause by known or suspected adultery or the woman terminating the relationship.<sup>[16]</sup>

Jealousy, conflict over extramarital, sexual, love affairs, threat of separation or actual separation from intimate partner is important factors seen in spousal or consortial homicide.<sup>[17]</sup>

All the studied cases belonged to low socio economic status, less educated and illiterate families. The risk of child abuse, wife abuse is greater among those who are poor and or unemployed and who had low prestige job.

Although very few cases occur, they should not be left on the mercy of nobody but there should be psychological, psychiatric and social investigations of such incidences. Then we can come to know the causes behind such incidences and can try to prevent them, thus preventing loss of life`s.

Some studies have shown that murder – suicides may involve more violent method than homicide alone, suggesting greater levels of frustration and aggression.<sup>[18]</sup>

**Homicide** – suicide is a severe form of interpersonal violence leading to shock and incomprehension in society at large.

Thus, from this study we conclude that in series of dyadic deaths the perpetrators are usually males of relatively younger age group and who victimises the persons who are mostly dependent on them like wife, children`s etc... Similarly violent method of execution in the form of stab injuries, strangulation, drowning was observed thus stating the fury of mental status of the perpetrator.

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