CHILD HOMICIDES IN ADANA, TURKEY

Kenan Kaya*

*Department of Forensic Medicine, Adana Group Administration, Adana, Turkey

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Address for Correspondence: Kenan Kaya, Department of Forensic Medicine, Adana Group Administration, Adana, Turkey

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Abstract

Violence is a common and important public health problem in our country like all over the world. Homicide is the last point of no return and solution. Nearly at all communities; homicide is being accepted as most serious crime and it is being punished with severe sanctions and also they are trying to develop prevention strategies.

At this study, 5159 cases were investigated retrospectively which were medico-legally autopsied at institute of Forensic Medicine Adana Group Authority Morgue Specialty office between the years of 2009-2011. Cases were investigated according to cases' ages, genders, the objects (weapons) causing death, localization of wounds. Besides, toxicological analyzes of all cases were reviewed. It was seen that; 79 (66%) of total 120 child victims were male, youngest was 7 months old, eldest one was 18 years old, average age was 13,5. It was detected that when we group the children according to their ages; most cases [85(70,8%)] were between the ages of 13-18. When we look at homicide methods, it was seen that; firearms is at first place with 73 (60,8%) of cases. It was detected that; head is at first place with 50 (41,7%) of the cases and it was following by rib cage area with 21 cases. When we look at shooting ranges at the cases which were killed by firearms, shooting was done from adjacent range at 40 cases.

Even if removing the violence isn't possible; revealing its reasons and methods provides possibility of forming strategies.

Key Words: Child; homicide; death; method.

INTRODUCTION

Violence is a common and important public health problem in our country like all over the world^{1,2}. Homicide is the last point of no return and solution. Nearly at all communities; homicide is being accepted as most serious crime and it is being punished with severe sanctions and also they are trying to develop prevention strategies. It was said that violence caused deaths (homicide and suicide) induces more than 50000 people's deaths between the ages of 15-24 every year at USA, homicide is the second common death reason³.

According to United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child, all human beings below the age of 18 is being considered as a child except the situation of reaching majority previously⁴. According to same convention, contracting countries are obligated to make maximum effort for surviving and development of child. They are obligated to taking precautions and making legal arrangements, correcting incommodities of their laws due to necessity of convention. Governors must know that childhood deaths which

are caused by violence are preventable and preventing them is possible only by taking precautions.

MATERIALS-METHODS:

At this study, 5159 cases were investigated retrospectively which were medico-legally autopsied at institute of Forensic Medicine Adana Group Authority Morgue Specialty office between the years of 2009-2011. 120 cases below the age of 18 were taken to the study, which were decided as homicide according to prosecution records, crime scene investigation reports and autopsy signs. Cases were investigated according to cases' ages, genders, the objects (weapons) causing death, localization of wounds. Besides, toxicological analyzes of all cases were reviewed.

RESULTS:

It was seen that; 79 (66%) of total 120 child victims were male, 41 (34%) of them were female, youngest was 7 months old, eldest one was 18 years old, average age was 13,5. It was detected that when we group the children according to their ages; most

cases [85(70,8%)] were between the ages of 13-18. When we look at homicide methods, it was seen that; firearms is at first place with 73 (60,8%) of cases, it was following by sharp objects with 28 cases and it was following by obtuse traumatic lesions with 14 cases. When we look at injured parts of the victims, it was detected that; head is at first place with 50 (41,7%) of the cases and it was following by rib cage

area with 21 cases. It was seen that, most wounds in single case by firearms was 6, most penetrating stab wounds in single case was 33. It was detected that; when we look at shooting ranges at the cases which were killed by firearms, shooting was done from adjacent range at 40 cases. THC (tetrahydro cannabinoid) was found at 3 cases and amphetamine was found at one case at toxicological reports.

Table 1: Distribution of child homicides according to age and years

Age/year	2009	2010	2011	Total
	Male-Female	Male-Female	Male-Female	Male-Female
0-6	3 -1	4-2	2-1	9 -4
7-12	8 - 1	5-1	5-2	18-4
13-18	14-8	18-10	23-12	55-30
Total	25-10	27-13	30-15	82-8

Figure 1: Distribution of injuries according to the instrument used in

Figure 2: Distribution of injuries by regions

DISCUSSION:

This study was done with the aim of revealing the features of childhood homicides at Adana. Revealing these homicides' features is providing calling attention of governors whose charge is protecting the children who were exposed to that violence. It also provides datas needed for fulfilling the responsibilities of governors according to the international conventions which were signed by them.

Even if removing the violence isn't possible; revealing its reasons and methods provides possibility of forming strategies. In our study it was seen that; like at the most of developed and developing countries, homicides by firearms is at first place. But it was seen that at some countries where the firearms' usage

limited seriously, penetrating stab wounds take the first place. Especially limiting the access to firearms will provide decline at childhood homicides like at all age group homicides.

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