

Homicide-Suicide: One of the Faces of 'Love'

Abhishek Yadav*, Mohit Gupta**, Mantaran Singh Bakshi***, Sudhir Kumar Gupta****

Authors Affiliation: *Assistant Professor ****Professor & Head, Department of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Ansari Nagar, New Delhi, Delhi 110029, India. **Associate Professor, Department of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology, VMMC & Safdarjung Hospital, New Delhi, Delhi 110029 India. ***Clinical Fellow, Trauma and Orthopaedics, Southmead Hospital, Bristol, United Kingdom.

Reprints Requests: Abhishek Yadav, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Forensic Medicine, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Ansari Nagar, New Delhi, Delhi 110029, India.

E-mail: drayad_in@yahoo.com

Received on 25.04.2017, Accepted on 09.05.2017

Abstract

Homicide – suicide cases are uncommon methods of death. However, with the advent of internet and technology there appears to be a rise in the number of these cases. These cases are different as they are easily solved. They are also easily prevented if timely counselling and peer guidance is obtained. Recording statistics of these crimes can help in better understanding of the crime. Here we present an interesting case of a dejected lover who has committed the crime of passion in as cruel manner as possible, while celebrating the last date with his partner.

Keywords: Homicide-Suicide; Dyadic Death; Crime of Passion; Strangulation.

Introduction

Homicide-Suicide is a relatively uncommon method of death. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) of India does not record these crimes together, rather they are recorded separately as homicides and suicides [1,2]. However with the advent and spread of internet, there appears to be a rise in reported homicide and suicide cases [3-8]. These cases (homicide-suicide) are important, though they do not burden the police since they are easily solved, as they leave the family members of the deceased in a state of despair and shock. A Forensic Pathologist can match wounds with positions of bodies at a scene and Psychiatrists can develop a deeper insight into the minds of people who commit such crimes especially if they survive [9]. Here we present an interesting case of a dejected lover who had committed the crime of passion in as cruel manner as possible, while celebrating the last date with his partner. The authors aim to increase

the awareness amongst the society so as to prevent such unfortunate incidents.

Case History

The girl was learning dance from a dance academy but had stopped going there for 3 months prior to the incident. On 28/6/2016 she left home for some household work and told her family that she would also be visiting her dance academy. Her mother talked to her at 4:30 pm and she replied that she will be coming back to home in few hours. But when she did not return and she was traceable then her family went to the dance academy and found it locked from outside. The girl didn't return in night, and her family members again went to dance academy the next day. The place was a basement with an iron channel at the entrance which was closed with a lock. A wooden door was inside of the channel (Photograph 1). On pushing the door, it opened and a man was seen

hanging. The family informed the police who broke open the lock. Rose petals were seen on the staircase. The body of the girl was recovered from the carpet on the floor with an electrical extension cord wrapped around her neck (Photograph 2) while the body of the boy was recovered found suspended from the fan on the roof (Photograph 3). Two candles were found on the opposite corners of the carpet along with one match box and a screwdriver. Two rings were recovered from the pocket of the boy. No suicide note was found.



Photograph 1: Photograph of the outer metallic channel with inner wooden door - entry gate of gymnasium



Photograph 2: Dead body of girl found on carpet with electrical cord wound around neck



Photograph 3: Body of male completely suspended

Autopsy Findings of Boy

The body was of a young adult male with 166 cm length, average built and intact clothing. Bluish discoloration of nails and lips were present. Rigor mortis was present in the passing stage over upper part of the body. Post-mortem staining was present over hands, legs, feet and back, except pressure areas.

A reddish brown parchmented ligature mark of width 4 cm was present in the anterior midline of neck running obliquely upwards, laterally and backwards merging with the posterior hairline at the nape of neck. The underlying soft tissues were dry, pale, glistening and hard to touch and devoid of any extravasation or hematoma. Thyroid complex, underlying muscles and blood vessels were intact. No other external antemortem injury was present over the body. Internal organs were congested with petechiae hemorrhages present over interlobar fissures of both the lungs. About 50 ml of pinkish liquid material was present in stomach with congestion of mucosal walls. The cause of death was concluded as 'Asphyxia due to Antemortem hanging.'

Autopsy Findings of Girl

The body was of a young adult female with 152cm length, average built and intact clothing. Bluish discoloration of nails and lips were present. Rigor mortis was present in the passing stage over upper

part of the body. Post-mortem staining was present over back except pressure areas. Conjunctivae were congested. The rest of the natural orifices were normal.

A grey colored electrical cable attached to a 3 Pin extension box having a single running knot is found encircling the neck in four loops with a knot present below angle of left side of neck. One free end was attached to a 3 pin box and other free end was terminating in a three pin plug. The circumference of wire was 2 cm and of the whole ligature material on close approximation was 6.5 cm.

A reddish ligature mark of width 2.5 cm was present in the anterior midline of neck running horizontally, laterally and backwards completely encircling the neck. The underlying soft tissues show congestion and a bluish contusion of size 2 cm X 1 cm was present in Sternocleidomastoid muscle on the left side. Thyrohyoid complex, underlying muscles and blood vessels were intact. Trachea was congested. Multiple linear superficial incised wounds were present over both sides of neck (Photograph 4). Internal organs were congested with petechiae hemorrhages present over interlobar fissures of both the lungs. About 20 ml of pinkish liquid material was present in stomach with congestion of mucosal walls. The cause of death was concluded as 'Asphyxia due to ligature compression of neck.'



Photograph 4: Multiple incised wounds with ligature mark over neck of the girl

Discussion

Dyadic death includes both homicide-suicide and suicide-suicide pacts [10]. Many authors have limited this term to involve only Homicide- suicide deaths. However there is no standardized operational definition for these deaths [11]. Mazruk et al [11], have classified dyadic deaths as spousal/ consortial, familial, and extra-familial type with different sub classification based on motive of crime.

Most homicide-suicide episodes can be regarded as extended suicides, where the decision to commit suicide is taken first and the along with that there is a decision to kill associate family members. Suicide in such cases is therefore usually not considered to be crime of remorse as the primary act is their own suicide [12]. In most of Homicide-suicide deaths the perpetrator is the dominant partner and usually a male [10].

In the present case the victim (girl) appeared to be the dependant partner and the male appeared to be the dominant partner. The victim had visited her paramour in his dance studio where the male had strangulated her to death showing his dominance. The boy had stopped his dance classes for about three months prior to the incident. He had told one of his female friends that he was in relation with the deceased girl. The detailed history revealed that the family members of the girl had fixed her marriage. The girl had not objected to the proposed marriage and the family members were not aware of the alleged relationship with the deceased boy. The Girl had been engaged the previous week with another man. On the day of the crime the girl had voluntarily went to meet the boy. She had told her family that she would be going to gym but had not disclosed any other details.

The family waited for the girl and were frantic when they were not able to trace the girl. At the crime scene there showed flower petals on stairs and candles showing the intimacy and love of the couple. It also indicated the pre-planning of the boy who probably wanted to celebrate his last date with his love interest. At the crime scene no other ligature material was recovered. The ligature material used to strangulate the girl was an electric wire which was still attached to the electric box. This could be because he had not initially planned and the crime was committed in the momentary state of mind. It is possible that during their meeting the boy could not bear the possibility of separation from his love interest and strangled the girl with whatever was available at that instance and subsequently

committed suicide. As in the present case most suicides are done within with-in seconds or minutes of the killing [13].

In most cases the suicide and homicide were planned together though in the present case it was not clear whether the girl was a participant of the crime or simply a victim [13].

It has been shown those suicidal ideations are transmitted to the dependent partner [10]. It is possible that in the present case the depressed mental status of the male affected the female, leading to such a gross act. The preparations at the crime scene suggested that the meeting had been pre-planned by both the victims but whether the crime was pre-planned or not was unsure.

Conclusion

With the advent of technology ideas and thoughts are transmitted quickly from one to another. People have better access to each other through social sites and mobile applications. There is no privacy and though there may be physical separation there is no mental separation.

This results in people continuously being influenced by each other. It is possible that young children or young adults who are in relationship are constantly affected by their partner resulting in ideologies being transferred. These may result in such crimes of passion.

Prior to commission of offences, subtle signs are always present. Parents should be more vigilant towards their children. The peers should look for these minor signs/ indications that are left by such individuals before committing homicide-suicide, so that these are timely understood and corrective measures are taken.

Adequate counselling of such persons should be done. The Crime records bureau should maintain records for such crimes as they are easily preventable if timely intervened.

References

1. Crime in India. National Crime Records Bureau. Ministry of Home Affairs. <http://ncrb.nic.in/StatPublications/CII/CII2015/FILES/Compendium-15.11.16.pdf>. Last accessed on 25/4/2017.
2. Accidental Deaths & suicides in India 2015. National Crime Records Bureau. Ministry of Home Affairs. <http://ncrb.nic.in/>. Last accessed on 25/4/2017.
3. Thane: Jilted Lover Stabs Girl to Death; Kills Himself (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.ndtv.com/cities/thane-jilted-lover-stabs-girl-to-death-kills-himself-564139>.
4. Police: Boyfriend fatally shot girlfriend before killing himself (2017). Retrieved from <http://fox59.com/2017/01/26/police-boyfriend-fatally-shot-girlfriend-before-killing-himself/>.
5. Lover Commits Suicide After Trying To Kill Girlfriend (2016). <http://www.siasat.com/news/lover-commits-suicide-trying-kill-girlfriend-1011560/>.
6. Bantwal: Jilted lover kills girl, commits suicide at Koila (2017) <http://www.daijiworld.com/news/newsDisplay.aspx?newsID=430608>.
7. Man kills teenage girlfriend then commits suicide (2016). Retrieved from <https://www.tuko.co.ke/101828-girl-18-killed-lover-two-days-receiving-kcse-results.html>.
8. Lover kills his girlfriend, commits suicide (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.dailypioneer.com/state-editions/lucknow/lover-kills-his-girlfriend-commits-suicide.html>.
9. Copeland AR. Dyadic Death-Revisited. *Journal of the Forensic Science Society* 1985;25:181-8.
10. Berman AL. Dyadic Death: A Typology. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, Winter 1996;26(4): 342-50.
11. Mazruk P et al. The epidemiology of murder-suicide, *J Am Med Assoc* 1992;267(31):79-83.
12. Milroy CM. Homicide followed by suicide: remorse or revenge? *Journal of Clinical Forensic Medicine* 1998;5:61-64.
13. Milroy CM. Reasons for Homicide and Suicide in Episodes of Dyadic Death in Yorkshire and Humberside. *Med. Sci. Law* 1995;35(3):213-7.