

Female suicides with the use of firearms in India: A 5 year study

Sachil Kumar

King George's Medical University, India

Little attention has been given to the role of firearms in suicide. Firearm injuries are very common nowadays. They may result from criminal, accidental discharge or suicidal attempt. Firearm is fast becoming a major killing apparatus. The invention of firearm has come as a curse to this world; it has become the most dreaded killing tool used by human being to kill them. The frequency of firearm related deaths appear to be higher in nations where firearms are more readily available, either legally or illegally.

Objectives: A study was conducted on the female suicides with the use of firearms in India. Data were collected from the mortuary of King George's Medical University, Lucknow, India, recorded a total of 5304 suicides within the 5-year period 2008–2012 (3046 males & 2258 females) out of which firearms were used in 217 cases (172 males, 45 females).

Material & methods: Firearm suicide cases were selected from archive files of cases examined by Medico legal Departments. The cases collected from medico legal files of the Medico legal Department were analyzed for age and sex of the victims, site and direction of injuries, marital status, cause of death and location. In addition to the value of examination of suicide motives and type of weapon used. All data subsequently underwent descriptive statistical analysis using SPAS program version II.

Results: Firearms were used in 217 cases (172 males, 45 females). An autopsy was performed in all of the 45 female cases. The women's ages ranged from 16 to 59 years. Their marital status was: married 64%, single 27%, widowed 7% and divorced 2%. A suicide note was found in eight cases; six women had a history of psychiatric illness, and six had previously attempted suicide. Predominant among the suicide motives were relationship problems 26.7% followed by mental 20% and organic 15.6% disorders as well as financial difficulties 15.6% and in 22.2% reason not known. Most of the women (80%) committed suicide in their own apartment, mainly in the bedroom. The weapons used were pistol (48.9%), revolver (31.1%), rifle (11.1%) and a blank cartridge gun (8.9%). The site of bullet-entry was the right temple (51.1%), mouth (11.1%), neck (11.1%), and chest (26.7%).

Conclusions: In spite of legal restrictions on the illegal access of firearms, access is easy and deaths by firearm wounding are still increasing.

sachilvohra@gmail.com