

## Trends of Homicidal Deaths in Southern Part of Assam: A Retrospective Study

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### Abstract

Homicide is the ultimate crime and its effects go far beyond the original loss of human life. Homicide also affects the lives of the victim's family, assailant's family and the community as a whole. Hence, they are the "secondary victims". This study was done to know the age distribution, gender distribution, social background, pattern of weapon used for homicidal purpose and the cause of death in homicidal death. This retrospective study was done by analysis of data from inquest reports, dead body challan and autopsy reports at the Department of Forensic Medicine, Silchar Medical College and Hospital, Silchar for a period of one year from 1st January 2022 to 31st December 2022. Data were entered in Microsoft excel sheet and statistical analysis was done using descriptive statistics. In this study majority of homicide victims were in 45-59 year age group. Most victims were male. Homicides are rare crime and hence reflected in our results. Law enforcement forces and every individual should feel responsible and help the state in the deliverance of justice.

**Key words:** Homicide, autopsy, weapon, victims.

### Introduction

Homicide is Killing of a human being by another human being. There are two types of homicides 1. Lawful which includes Justifiable and excusable homicide 2. Unlawful which includes murder (Sec. 300 IPC), culpable homicide amounting to murder (sec. 299 IPC) and not amounting to murder (sec. 304 IPC)<sup>5</sup>. Killing of a human being is done with malice or forethought, where two ingredients of Actus Rea and Mens Rea should work together to constitute the crime. It will have to prove beyond doubt that, the act of murder was a premeditated or pre planned act.

Without sufficient proof of forethought, the murder will amount to culpable homicide not amounting to murder<sup>3</sup>. Homicide is the most serious form of violent crime and the effects reach far wider to family and friends of the victim, offenders themselves and the community as a whole. Homicide blights the lives of the families of victim, assailant and the community. Hence, they can be described as "secondary victims"

### Material and Method

This study was carried out over a period of one year starting from 1st January 2022 to 31st December

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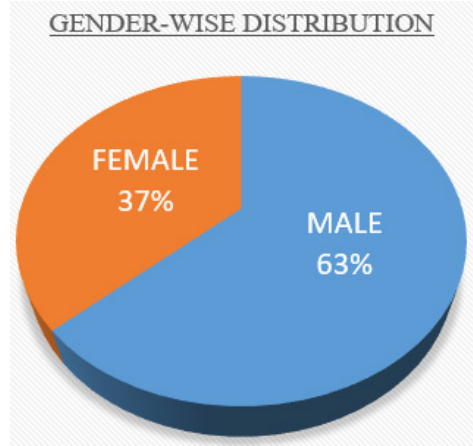
2022 in the Department of Forensic Medicine, Silchar Medical College and Hospital. Being the only tertiary care hospital in the entire southern Assam region, this hospital receives patients from the entire region. Hence, most of the autopsies are conducted at the Silchar Medical College. Out of the 800 autopsy cases conducted during the abovementioned period, a total of 30 cases were opined to be homicidal in nature and hence, taken as our study sample. Cases of unnatural deaths where cause of death could not be ascertained due to any reason such as decomposition, inadequate findings, pending reports of chemical analysis of viscera samples were excluded from the study. Each homicidal case was examined and evaluated. All parameters were entered from the information collected from inquest report, dead body challan and autopsy reports. Data collected were entered in Microsoft excel sheet and statistical analysis was done using descriptive statistics.

**Results**

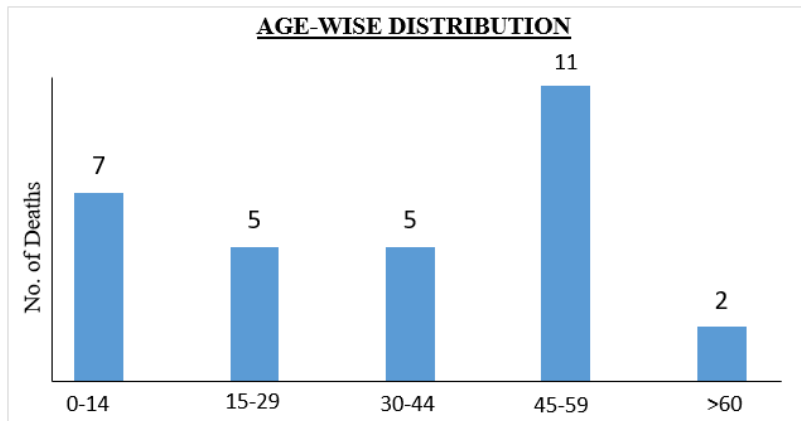
Total 800 autopsies were conducted during

the period of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 out of which total 30 (3.75%) cases were of homicide

- Gender wise Distribution:** Among 30 cases of Homicide 19 (63%) cases were male and 11 (37%) cases were female

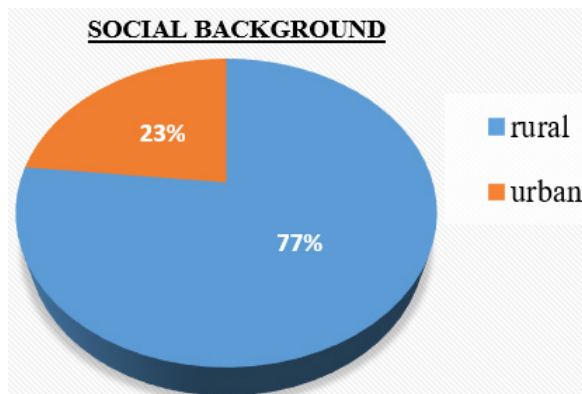


- Age wise Distribution-** Homicidal cases mostly found in the age group of 45-59 (11 cases) followed by in the age group of 0-14 years (07 Cases)

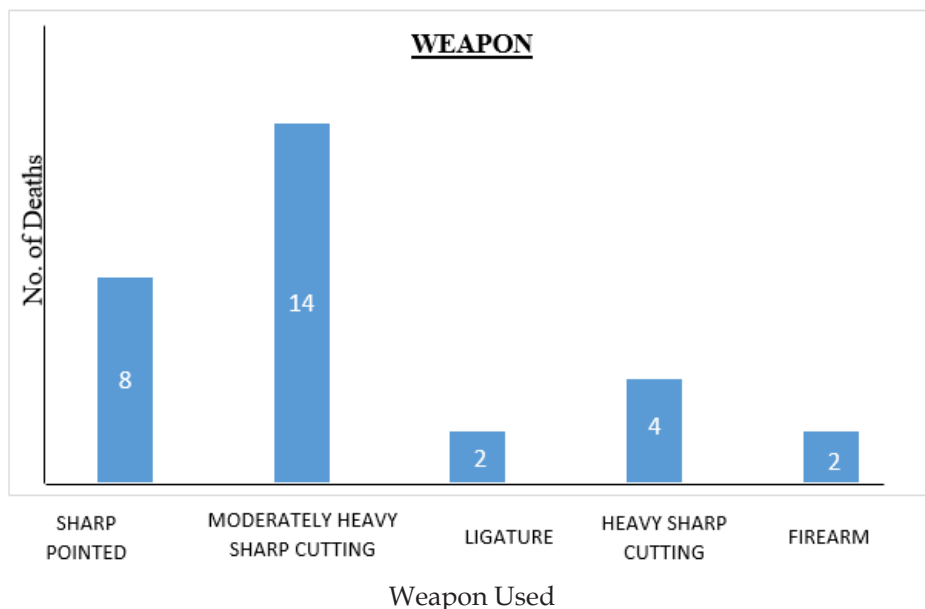


Age Groups (in years)

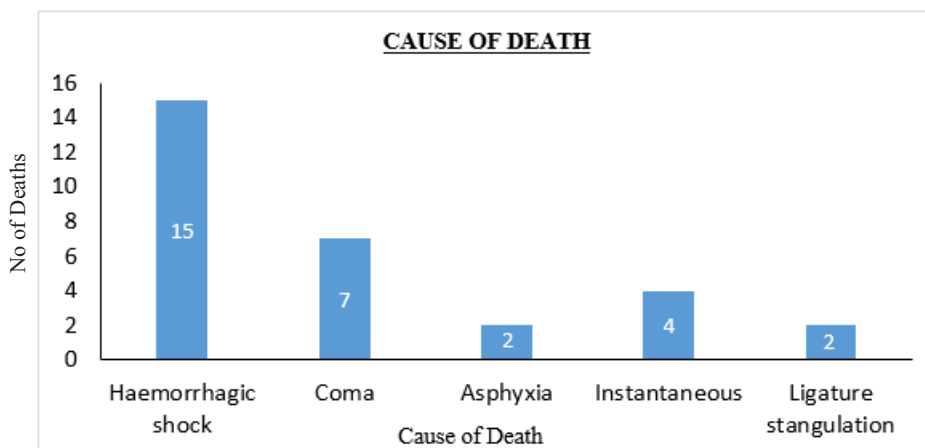
- Social background-** Homicidal cases mostly found in rural area i.e. 23 cases (77%)



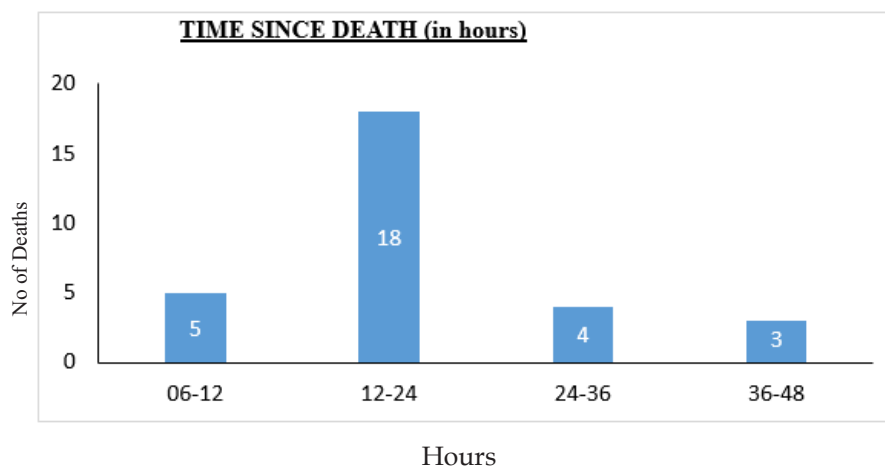
4. **Weapon:** In this study moderately heavy sharp cutting weapon 14 (47%) was most common followed by Sharp pointed weapon 8 (27%)



5. **Cause of death:** In this study most common cause of death was haemorrhagic shock 15 (50%) followed by coma 7 (23%)



6. **Time Since Death-** 18 (60%) cases were reported within 12-24 hours of death



## Discussion

- This study reveals that overall percentage of homicide cases are 3.75% of all medico-legal autopsies conducted during the mentioned time period which is similar to incidence reported in some studies [2,4] and much lesser than results revealed in S. Mohanty et al.[8] and Rastogi A.K et al.[6].
- Among the sufferers, males outnumbered females with a ratio of 1.77:1. This result correlates with [1,2,4,6,7,8,9], but with varying percentages.
- Haemorrhagic shock was the most common cause of death. Coma being the second most common cause of death. The result is similar to rates reported in other studies [2,6,8].
- Highest number of cases were reported from age-group 45-59 years followed by 0-14 years.
- Most cases were from rural areas, incidence is similar to study by S. Mohanty et al[8].
- In most of the homicidal deaths moderately heavy sharp cutting weapon was used.
- Around 2/3rd of the dead bodies in this study were brought for autopsy within 12-24 hours following death.
- Most often homicides are well planned. Hence, they are not witnessed usually. It becomes a difficult task for the investigating agencies to find the truth. Thorough analysis and scientific interpretation of autopsy findings, is the responsibility of a forensic expert. The findings help the investigating agencies and the judiciary to reach for evidence based legal conclusion.

## Conclusion

- Trends of homicide differ from region to region, time to time and are greatly influenced by the several demographic variables.
- Social and cultural values affect the crimes rates significantly. Updated knowledge of the existing trends of the homicides may help the law makers and judiciary in preventing homicides.
- Uplifting the social life of the marginalized and the population in general is very important.

- Continuous research regarding homicidal deaths is a must.
- Various factors can be analysed and laws can be strengthened so as to save innocent lives.

**Conflict of Interest:** Nil

**Source of Funding:** Self

**Ethical Clearance:** Data was collected from existing departmental records (Post mortem report, forwarding letter, inquest report and dead body challan etc) only, then analysis and the identity of any of the individuals is involved. .

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