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## Case Report

### **A Case Report of Dyadic Death with Husband as a Perpetrator**

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#### Abstract

The dyadic death is a fatal event in which one individual kills another and subsequently commits suicide within a short time interval ranging from one hour to one week. These are the most violent acts involving the most intimate partner or family members. Perpetrators are usually male. The causes in India range from domestic quarrels due to strained relationships, broken love affairs, infidelity, addiction, ill physical health, financial crisis, etc. Here we are reporting a case of dyadic death in which the perpetrator was 40 years old male, chronic alcoholic, auto-rickshaw driver. He killed his wife who was 35 years old. Autopsy examination shows injuries over the body as chop, stabs, incised injuries, and contusions. After killing his wife, the perpetrator hanged himself in his home. The detailed history was obtained from police and relatives, and the reason revealed as suspicion of infidelity and regular domestic quarrels. Legally and for police investigation, these are not high-profile cases since they just demand proper investigation and correct recording. It is better to undertake proper social, psychological, and psychiatric investigations to decrease or to stop such incidences. It is necessary to establish a national surveillance system for such episodes to know the exact circumstances of each case.

#### 1. Introduction

Dyadic death also referred to as homicide-suicide to an incident where homicide is committed followed by the perpetrator's suicide almost immediately or soon after the homicide. Homicide suicides are relatively uncommon and vary from region to region.<sup>1,2</sup> In India, there are no such statistics available, and also the National Crime Record Bureau doesn't have data regarding incidences of dyadic deaths. In situations, where murder has occurred and the perpetrator has been

found dead at the scene, the most likely scenario in such cases could be homicide-suicide or dyadic death.<sup>1,3,4</sup> When comparing homicides with dyadic deaths, research suggests that the perpetrator is more likely to commit suicide later when the motive is related to possessiveness, jealousy, sickness, or stress and these incidents are more likely to be premeditated than a homicide alone.<sup>5</sup>

Also, the reasons behind Dyadic Death may vary from case to case but in the Indian scenario,

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marital disharmony and financial burden are the major reasons for dyadic deaths. Other causes of dyadic death could be domestic quarrels due to strained relationships, infidelity, broken love affairs, addiction, financial crisis, psychiatric illness, ill physical health. Here a case of Dyadic Death is discussed related to infidelity leading to regular domestic quarrels.

## 2. Case history -

As per the police inquest, two bodies were recovered at home, of which one was male and the other was female. Both the deceased were brought for medicolegal autopsy at our center. The autopsy was conducted on the deceased who was 35 years old female. On external examination, multiple injuries (Fig 1) in the form of chop stabs and incised injuries were observed on the body. A single chop injury was observed over the chin with a cut fracture of the underlying mandible. Also, multiple stab injuries along with incised injuries were observed over the neck and back. On internal examination (Fig 2), the stab injuries over the neck showed penetration deep up to the tracheal lumen and cut transection of the left carotid artery along with gross hemorrhagic areas in the muscles of the neck. The cause of death was issued as "Death due to chop and stab injuries" and the manner of death was homicidal in nature.

An autopsy was conducted on 40 years old male deceased, an auto-rickshaw driver by profession, and a chronic alcoholic. On external examination, a single ligature mark was observed over the neck, above the level of the thyroid cartilage, extending upward and backward. On internal examination of the neck, a faint, pale, parchment-like ligature mark was observed in relation to the external ligature mark. The cause of death was issued as "Asphyxia due to hanging" and the manner of death was suicidal in nature.

The detailed information obtained by the investigating officer revealed that the perpetrator and victim were married 10 years back and had one male child. After marriage, there were frequent quarrels among husband and wife, also he had a suspicion of the infidelity of his wife. He killed his wife for the reason of infidelity with the use of a sharp weapon and then he hanged himself. At autopsy, a ligature mark over neck was observed (Fig. 3). By profession, he was an auto-rickshaw driver and addicted to alcohol. The history revealed that the husband was not under any kind of psychiatric

treatment and a suicide note was not observed at the scene of the crime. So, in this particular case as per the police investigation report, it was observed that the husband was depressed, stressed, and was addicted to alcohol leading to Dyadic Death.

**Fig. 1:** Photograph showing multiple injuries over the body of the female victim.



**Fig 2:** Photograph showing neck dissection with internal injuries to the neck structures.



## 3. Discussion –

Homicide suicides are rare unusual deaths with social importance. These kinds of cases refer to an episode wherein a homicide is committed



followed by the suicide of the perpetrator. These are human tragedies in which the perpetrator, more often a male, kills one or more victims, typically his wife and or children and or some other intimates from family. It is infrequent, can aggravate family commotion, psychological trauma, and public concern.<sup>6</sup>

**Fig 3: Photograph showing ligature mark over the neck of the perpetrator.**



Ghormade PS et al, Gupta S et al and Byard RW et al reported cases of dyadic deaths in which the husband was a perpetrator of a crime.<sup>7,8,9</sup> Dhawane SG et al and Gupta BD et al had described homicide-suicide episodes involving males as a perpetrator but only a few reports with mother as perpetrator had been published.<sup>10,11</sup> Bardale RV et al reported two different cases of dyadic deaths in which perpetrators were married mothers who killed their children by drowning and then they committed suicide by drowning.<sup>12</sup> Gadhari RK et al reported a case in which a mother was a perpetrator who killed her two children by drowning.<sup>13</sup> In our present case report the perpetrator was the husband who killed his wife with the use of a sharp weapon. The male perpetrators are often involved in crimes due to high concentrations of testosterone which have been reported in populations characterized by high aggression, including criminals with personality disorders, alcoholic violent offenders, and spousal abusers.<sup>14</sup>

Milroy CM et al had reported 52 cases of the homicide-suicide pact and also reported common causes for dyadic death as a breakdown in a relationship (46%), mental illness (21%), physical ill-health (11%), financial stress (10%).<sup>15</sup> The case report by Ghormade PS et al reported three different cases of dyadic deaths with three different reasons as financial burden, unemployment, and fear of not

continuing love relationship.<sup>7</sup> In our case report, strained relationship due to suspicion of his wife's infidelity was the reason for such violent tragedy. Bossarte RM et al reported common methods of committing suicide in perpetrators of dyadic deaths as shooting (80.4%), sharp weapon injuries (11%), hanging (6%), poisoning (4%), fall from height (3%), burns (1%) and vehicular injuries.<sup>16</sup> Byard RW et al and Santoro JP et al reported suicidal hanging by perpetrators in homicides-suicides cases.<sup>9,17</sup> In our present case, the perpetrator preferred a method of committing suicide by hanging. As ligature material is easily available, the perpetrator prefers to commit suicide by hanging himself after the crime.

Legally and for police investigation, such types of cases are not high-profile cases as they just demand proper investigation and correct recording. These kinds of deaths not only affect single families but also have a tremendous impact on society regarding strained family relationships and the reason behind such tragic events of dyadic deaths. So, it is better to undertake proper social, psychological, and psychiatric counseling in order to decrease such incidences. It is absolutely essential to establish a national surveillance system for such episodes to know the exact circumstances of each case.<sup>18</sup> Every post-mortem center should be requested to keep data regarding these kinds of death and should be reflected on the National Crime Record Bureau website. So it will be easy to calculate the exact numbers of dyadic deaths region wise and also we can find the reasons behind such violent acts and minimize their prevalence.

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