



Femicide in Cali Colombia: A view from public health

Feminicídio em Cali Colômbia: Uma visão da saúde pública

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Abstract

Introduction: In most cases, violence against women is committed by their partners or ex-partners and this violence is a global public health problem that almost always ends in their death. Femicide is understood as the murder of a woman just for the fact of being a female individual, perpetuating gender inequality. **Objective:** To analyze femicide in Cali from its epidemiological characterization. **Materials and methods:** A descriptive population-based study was carried out using secondary sources that included 287 records of violent deaths of women. 53 cases between 2017 and 2019 were identified and analyzed, which were investigated and classified as femicide by the Crimes Against Women Unit of the Prosecutor's Office. The epidemiological characterization was conducted based on the information provided, which was useful to identify the study variables: age, method, place of occurrence, imprisonment of perpetrator, and sentence. **Results:** Femicide occurred between the ages of 9 and 89, with stabbing being the most commonly used killing method. A conviction was executed only in 18.9% of the total cases. **Conclusions:** Femicide occurs at any age and has a high impunity degree mostly because of an ineffective judicial system.

Keywords: Femicide; gender violence; gender inequality. (Fuente: DeCS, Bireme).

Resumen

Introducción: En la mayoría de ocasiones, la violencia contra la mujer, es cometida por su pareja o expareja, siendo un problema de salud pública mundial que casi siempre termina en un feminicidio. Este se entiende como el asesinato de una mujer por el hecho de serlo, perpetuando la inequidad de género. **Objetivo:** Visibilizar el feminicidio en Cali a partir de su caracterización epidemiológica. **Materiales y métodos:** Se realizó un estudio descriptivo de base poblacional de fuentes secundarias, a partir de 287 registros de muertes violentas en mujeres, de los cuales se identificaron y analizaron 53 casos atendidos en la unidad de vida de delitos contra la mujer de la Fiscalía entre el 2017 al 2019, tipificados como feminicidio. La caracterización epidemiológica se realizó con base en la información suministrada que permitió identificar las variables de estudio: edad, mecanismo, lugar de ocurrencia, medida de aseguramiento del victimario y sentencia. **Resultados:** El feminicidio se presentó entre los 9 y 89 años, el mecanismo más utilizado fue el arma corto punzante. Sólo en el 18,9% se ha dictado sentencia condenatoria. **Conclusiones:** El feminicidio se presenta en cualquier edad, tiene un alto grado de impunidad en muchas ocasiones por la ineficiencia del sistema judicial.

Palabras clave: Feminicidio; violencia de género; inequidad de género. (Fuente: DeCS, Bireme).

Resumo

Introdução: Na maioria das vezes, a violência contra a mulher é cometida pelo companheiro ou ex-parceiro, tratando-se de um problema de saúde pública mundial que quase sempre culmina em feminicídio. Isso é entendido como o assassinato de uma mulher pelo fato de ser uma delas, perpetuando a desigualdade de gênero. **Objetivo:** Tornar visível o feminicídio em Cali a partir de sua caracterização epidemiológica. **Materiais e métodos:** Foi realizado um estudo descriptivo de base populacional de fontes secundárias, a partir de 287 registros de mortes violentas de mulheres, dos quais foram identificados e analisados 53 casos, atendidos na unidade de vida por crimes contra a mulher da denúncia pública (fiscalia) entre 2017 e 2019, classificados como feminicídio. A caracterização epidemiológica foi realizada com base nas informações prestadas que permitiram identificar as variáveis do estudo: idade, mecanismo, local de ocorrência, medida de segurança do agressor e pena. **Resultados:** O feminicídio ocorreu entre as idades de 9 e 89 anos, o mecanismo mais utilizado foi arma branca. Apenas em 18,9% houve condenação. **Conclusões:** O feminicídio ocorre em qualquer idade, tem alto grau de impiedade em muitas ocasiões devido à ineficiência do sistema judicial.

Palavras chave: Femicídio; violência de gênero; iniquidade de gênero. (Fonte: DeCS, Bireme).

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total. Garcia and Franco found that in 41.1% of the cases, femicide occurred in married, common law or divorced women⁽¹²⁾. On the other hand, Larrea⁽¹⁹⁾ reported that 38% of femicide cases affected either married or common law women. These results demonstrate that femicide is related to the marital status and couples relationships.

Regarding the level of education, 49.1% of femicide cases affected women with high school education. The Garcia and Franco study showed that in Bogota. 27.9% of femicides occurred in women with high school education. This behavior may be due to the fact that most women start couple relationships at an early age, which could make it difficult to continue their education training⁽¹⁸⁾.

The mechanism utilized to commit femicide was short stabbing weapon, with 47.2%. In their study carried out in Tlaxcala, Mexico. Aguilar Hernandez and Aguilar Gutierrez found that 27.9% of femicides occurred through beatings and the difference in this mechanism could be due to the fact that the majority of these events occur in the bedroom of the victims, where it is easier to utilize domestic elements such as short stabbing weapons^(21,22,23).

On the other hand, in 2009, Huerta and Jimenez showed in their report of the Colombian Forensic Sciences Institute that 11.976 were murdered and the most common mechanism to perpetrate femicide in half of the cases was through fire arm⁽¹²⁾. This indicates that no specific mechanism exists.

In 54.7% of the cases where charges were pressed there were no arrests made. This result is similar to that reported by Garcia and Franco, where 49.8% of the cases did not have arrest warrant.

The level of impunity for this crime is high as evidenced in 81.1% of the cases, where no sentence was given to the perpetrators^(24,25,26). In his article "Femicide in Latin America, legal vacuum or deficit of State law?". Sacomano⁽²⁷⁾ reports that the impunity rate for femicide in Latin America reaches 98% of the filed reports. Likewise, Honduras has an impunity percentage of 95%. These results are due to the inefficiency of the judicial system and the difficulty to typify the death of women as femicide.

The results obtained in this study indicates a gradual increase in this phenomenon which greatly impacts public health and the challenge lies in creating programs that permit and integral approach to the development of public policies which make it possible to advance and transform statewide practices geared towards decreasing this event. When taking into account the social and developmental implications which characterize the regions, it is evident that the socioeconomic and cultural levels are not the causes since women are victims of femicide for the single fact of being women.

Conclusions

It can be concluded that femicide occurs at any age and has a high impunity grade in many occasions because the governmental policies against violence towards woman have not produced the desired results. Also the lax Colombian judicial system

prevents decreasing the negative impact of this phenomenon in society.

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