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Forensic Emergency Medicine - Six-Year Experience of 13823 Cases in a University Emergency Department

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**Abstract:** Aims: Clinical forensic medicine deals with cases involving both the legal and medical aspects of patient care, such as motor vehicle trauma or poisoning. In this study, we aimed to draw attention to the forensic issues by retrospective investigation of 13823 emergency cases and to share our experiences on this topic. Materials and Methods: This retrospective study was conducted in a university Emergency Department (ED) in Ankara, Turkey. The data were collected from official hospital police sheets. Results: Between 2000 and 2005, 13823 legal cases (3.66% of all ED patients) were examined, and 58.23% of them were male. The mean age was  $28.03 \pm 16.42$  years. The main injury patterns were motor vehicle trauma (43.84%), physical assault (19.04%), suicide attempts (17.10%), and carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning (6.62%). Most of the cases were in the 20-29 years of age group (30.01%). Suicide attempts, CO poisoning and sexual assault victims were mostly female. 46.47% of the cases were admitted to the ED between 16:00 and 23:59. Forensic cases were mostly reported in May (9.92%). Two hundred and forty-two forensic cases died in the ED and 42 died outside the ED previously; 71.53% of them were male. The main cause of death was motor vehicle trauma (62.50%). Conclusions: Emergency physicians will face the challenges of addressing both medical and forensic needs of ED patients.

**Key Words:** Forensic medicine, emergency medicine, traffic accidents, violence, suicide, carbon monoxide poisoning

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