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Suicide in the Province of Eskişehir, Turkey: The Approach of Forensic Medicine

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Abstract: In the present study, a retrospective evaluation of suicides in the province of Eskişehir in 1997-1999 is made. Investigation reports of the Central Prosecutor's Office were obtained and the demographic data of the victims as well as the judicial criteria for the classification as "suicide" were evaluated. There were 94 cases of suicide and 65 of them (69.1%) involved males. Age distribution showed a predominance in the age group of 15-34 years. Suicide in males over 55 years of age occurred more frequently than in females ($p < 0.05$). Causes of death in suicides included hanging in 68.0% of cases, firearm wounding in 16.0%, jumping from heights in 7.4%, drug intake in 5.3%, railway suicides in 2.2% and butane inhalation in 1.1%; 79.8% of suicides occurred in residences. In 93.6% of the cases, scene investigation reports and drawings were obtainable, while photographs of the scene or of the victim were present in 53.2% of cases. A forensic medicine specialist's inquest had been performed in all cases whilst a medico-legal autopsy had been carried out in only 29.8% of cases. Death certificates were issued following an inquest and scene investigation in 66 cases. Medico-legal autopsies were performed in 73.3% of the cases of firearm wounding, 25.0% of the cases of hanging and 6.7% of suicides committed by other means. In conclusion, we emphasize the importance of a medico-legal autopsy in all suicide cases.

Key Words: Forensic pathology, Suicide, Demographic data, Post-mortem examination

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