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Circumstances involving female suicide: a psychosocial autopsy

Eder Samuel Oliveira Dantas¹, Jacileide Guimarães¹

¹Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte

ABSTRACT

Aim: To analyze the psychosocial context of the moments that preceded death by suicide of women in a municipality of Rio Grande do Norte. **Method:** This is a study of the psychosocial autopsy type, using a qualitative approach, developed in a municipality of Rio Grande do Norte that presents a strong history involving suicide. The collection of necropsy reports was carried out at the Technical Institute of Expertise and then in-depth interviews were carried out with twelve relatives of suicidal women, from the semi-structured interview script for psychosocial autopsies; the analysis of the data took place through the Thematic Content Analysis. **Preliminary results:** The suicides studied presented characteristics very close to what is already known in the literature; it was verified the presence of mental disorders, marital conflicts, emotional dependence and gender violence as strong predictors of female suicide acts.

Descriptors: Suicide; Women; Mental health; Gender and Health.

PROBLEM SITUATION AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

It is projected that by 2020 more than one and a half million people will commit suicide in the world and that the number of attempts is twenty times greater, characterizing this phenomenon as a serious public health problem ⁽¹⁾.

It is known that men commit suicide three times more than women, but in the last decades, there has been a greater increase of female suicide in comparison to the male, making relevant the act of conceiving studies on suicide in this perspective, since women try suicide three times more than men; this is the well-known paradox of suicide ⁽²⁾.

It is noteworthy that, in the Northeast region of Brazil, suicide presents itself with very particular characteristics, linked to the way of life of its people, which can influence suicidal acts, especially with a focus on gender ⁽¹⁾.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To analyze the psychosocial context of the moments that preceded the self-inflicted death of women in a municipality of Rio Grande do Norte.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- Describe the way of life of women who committed suicide in a municipality of Rio Grande do Norte;
- Identify unusual and particular factors that might have influenced the suicidal act in the contexts of life of suicidal women;
- Know aspects of the family and social networks of suicidal women.

METHOD

The present study is methodologically designed as a qualitative research of the psychosocial autopsy type, carried out in the municipality of Caicó, in the state of Rio Grande do Norte.

This is a qualitative research, using the psychosocial autopsy method⁽³⁾, whose intention is to perform a narrative retrospective on suicide cases, taking as a study scenario the municipality of Caicó, in the state of Rio Grande do Norte.

Necropsial reports were analyzed at the Technical-Scientific Institute of Expertise of Rio Grande do Norte, identifying cases of female suicides that met the following selection criteria: inclusion – individuals older than 18 years, deaths occurring in the time space between years of 2011-2016, with the respective necropsy reports and the availability of some informant contact; exclusion – deaths that did not occur in Rio Grande do Norte and illegible reports without clear identification of the cause of death.

In the process of data collection, it was decided to adopt the semi-structured interview script for psychosocial autopsies ⁽³⁾. This script is divided into two parts: the first one is related to the personal, socioeconomic profile, portrait and way of life of the subject, and the second part focuses on the atmosphere and image of the suicide, mental state that preceded the suicide and the family image before the situation lived. The in-depth interviews had an average duration of sixty-five minutes and were carried out in places of choice of the interviewees.

Data collection took place between April and July 2018 with its own financing. The data were prepared constituting a textual corpus reached by the semistructured interview, and, for analysis, a Thematic Content Analysis proposed by Laurence Bardin. This study is a dissertation research of the Academic Master's Degree in the Graduate Program in Collective Health of

the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte, approved by the Committee of Ethics in Research with Human Beings of the University Hospital Onofre Lopes, respecting the standards and ethical aspects recommended by Resolution 466/2012 of the National Health Council.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

After applying the above-mentioned criteria, nine cases of female suicides were selected. After telephone contact and home visit, it was identified that in four cases the family members did not reside in the state, totaling five cases of female suicide studied, which resulted in the interview of twelve relatives close to the victims. The presence of mental disorder (depression and schizophrenia), intense marital conflicts, emotional dependence, and gender violence emerged as analytical categories and were considered as the main predictors of suicide in the analyzed cases.

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