Correspondence

A further note on filicide with suicide in Turkey

To the Editor

I read with great interest the recent paper appearing in the journal on filicide in the city of Hong Kong by Kam Lun Hon.^[1] As there are very few reports on this tragic crime of one's own child, I wanted to add five attempts with different reasons from Turkey.

I have been collecting data on suicidal attempts of mothers from the archives of newspapers since 2008. Incidents were included if at least two of the newspaper had the news. Of these, five of them were included as filicide (Table).

It is interesting that two of them had immigration history as the underlying condition and of the three couples they either divorced or husband left home. One of them was saved by chance as the neighbors felt the smell of gas, finally saved by the police and the other was persuaded by a phyciatrist.

One of the mothers was immigrant to Germany from Turkey. The data on this case are missing as the German police did not give any information about the incident. This may be correct ethical way of attitude.

Nationwide collection of data on filicide with suicide may bring new insights to the problem.

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Author reply

It is good that filicide is also reported from Turkey to further enhance the pediatric literature. The author is right to comment that there are very few reports on this tragic crime of killing one's own child. Nevertheless, filicide is probably not rare. Indeed, it is the third leading cause of death amongst American children 5 to 14 years old; and parents were responsible for 61% of children murders under the age of 5.^[1]

Filicides have long been reported in history, religion, myth, folklore, fiction and culture (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Filicide>). In the Hebrew Bible, Genesis 22:1-24 tells Abraham's faith is tested by God by ordering him to sacrifice his son, Isaac, on Mount Moriah. Both Abraham and Isaac survive!

Underlying psychosocial issues are noted in some of the five incidents reported by the author. Interestingly, all perpetrators were mothers. It is a little unclear as to whether some of the mothers died in the incidents. Unlike the Hong Kong series, the mode of filicide appears to be varied.^[2] I concur with the author that nationwide systematic collection of data on filicide with suicide may bring new insights to the problem.

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Table. Filicide-suicide cases from Turkey

Perpetrator	Sex	Age	Incident	Outcome
45 y mother (Divorced but mother had violence from the father, Escaping from Germany)	Male	6 y	Burned charcoal	All died
40 y mother (Mother had brain tumor, Child was mentally retarded)	Female	8 y		
	Male	15 y	Suicide attempt with home gas	Saved by the police
34 y mother (Depression, Husband left home)	Female	14 y	First given a drug (?) then shot by the gun	All died
	Female	2 y	Died with the drug (?)	
19 y mother (Depression, Husband left home)	Male	9 mon	Suicide attempt from third floor	Saved by the psychiatrist
23 y mother (Immigrant to Germany)	?	18 mon	Data not given by the police	Not available