




Filicide, infanticide and familicide, and its intersections with femicide in South Africa

Authors: Naeemah Abrahams¹, Shanaaz Mathews², Carl Lombard³, Bianca Dekel¹, Lorna J Martin⁴ & Rachel Jewkes¹



Filicide: killing of a child by a parent
Infanticide: killing of a child under the age of 1 year
Familicide: killing of more than 1 family member
Neonaticide: killing of a new born (0-28 days)

INTRODUCTION

Very little is known about child homicide in low and middle income countries. Age is an important risk factor and younger age groups are most at risk. Limited information is available on perpetrators and the context of the murders and its intersections with femicide have not been explored. The South African 2009 national child homicide and female homicide study provided the opportunity to describe and explore the different forms of child homicide. This is important for developing prevention intervention for different age groups.

METHODOLOGY

National study
 Operating mortuaries in 2009 formed sampling frame
 Mortuaries divided into three strata (small, medium, big)
 Weighted sample of 38 mortuaries
 Adult women (18+ years)
 Children (boys and girls 0-17 years)
 Three process data collection victim, perpetrator and crime data



1. Mortuary register to identify homicides
2. Autopsy report to collect forensic data
3. Police interview

RESULTS

1277 child murders in South Africa in 2009

40% (454) children were under 5 years

26.4% (337) children were under 1 year

18.9% (241) were neonates

Infanticide rate: 28.3/100 000 live births

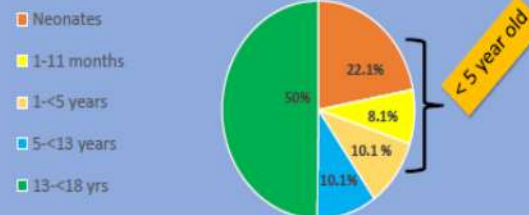
Early neonaticide (0-6 days) rate: 19.6/ 100 000 live births

Late neonaticide rate (>7days) 0.7/ 100 000 live births

44.5% of all child murders were linked to child abuse/neglect

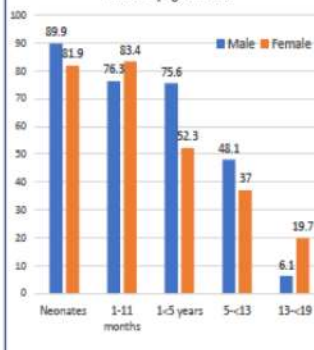
8.7% of all child murders were rape homicides

Child homicide 2009: Age pattern



Filicide

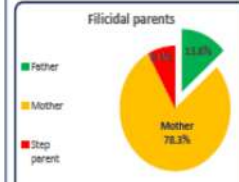
Filicide by age and sex



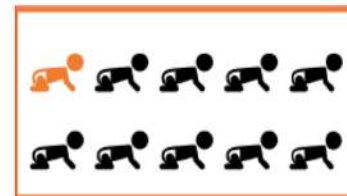
387 children (30.3%) killed by a parent.

Gender differences show more boys killed by a parent in the 1-13 year age group while in the 13+ group more girls killed by a parent.

The most common perpetrators are mothers with fathers responsible for 13.6% of filicidal deaths



Familicide



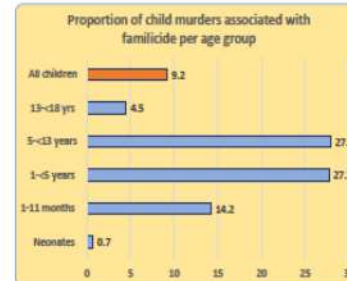
Nearly 1 in 10 (305) children killed within the context of another family member killed

16% of filicidal murders were also familicidal.

Most common age for familicide was the 1-13 years.

62.6% of familicidal perpetrators were another family member

Family members killed were commonly siblings and parents

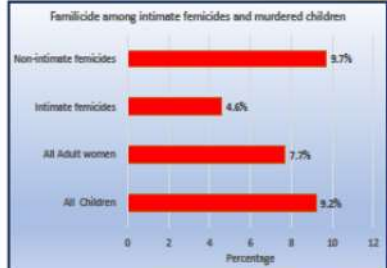


Intimate Partner Femicide

42% of all murdered adult women 18 years and older were killed by an intimate partner

Among women 14 years and older this was 56%

Familicide was not common among intimate partner femicides



CONCLUSION

Filicide, familicide and femicide are not rare events in South Africa.

Not much known about fathers as perpetrators of child murders.

Children more likely to be victims than intimate partner femicides in familicide murders.

Age pattern shows filicide decrease with age with highest risk among neonates.

This data is important to develop age specific interventions