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**Literature search results**

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**Search details**

Comparative study of matricide by individuals with or without mental illness, or prevalence of matricide in England/UK

**Resources searched**

NHS Evidence; TRIP Database; Cochrane Library; AMED; BNI; CINAHL; EMBASE; HMIC; MEDLINE; PsychINFO; Google Scholar

*Database search terms*:

*Google search string*:

**Summary**

No comparative study was found other than a Canadian study (item 14) and only a small number of relevant articles.

**Guidelines**

**Evidence-based reviews**

**Published research**

1. [Schizophrenia and matricide: An integrative review](#)
Author(s): Schug, Robert A

Citation: Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice, May 2011, vol./is. 27/2(204-229), 1043-9862;1552-5406 (May 2011)

Abstract: Though a modest number of studies dating back several decades have addressed a possible relationship between schizophrenia and matricide, or mother-killing, this literature to date remains largely unintegrated and findings have yet to be aggregated in any meaningful way. To address this, a qualitative review of studies related to both schizophrenia and matricide was conducted. Sixty-one publications were identified, consisting of case reports, descriptive studies, and comparison studies. Results indicated variable rates across studies of schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders among samples of matricidal offenders, though these rates appeared to be elevated in comparison to base rates of schizophrenia in the general population. Additionally, matricidal offenders with and without schizophrenia were in many cases characterized by negative family dynamics, pathological relationships with their mothers, and excessive offense violence. Though only limited generalizations can be made from qualitative synthesis of the literature in its current state, future investigations could lead to the establishment of a schizophrenia-matricide relationship which could have important implications in research, treatment, and criminal investigative areas of forensic psychology.

2. Matricide and two sexual femicides by a male strangler with a transgender sadomasochistic identity.

Author(s): Lauerma, Hannu, Voutilainen, Jukka, Tuominen, Tiina

Citation: Journal of Forensic Sciences, March 2010, vol./is. 55/2(549-550), 0022-1198;1556-4029 (Mar 2010)

Abstract: While violence against sexual minorities is a well-known phenomenon, sexual homicides committed by men with cross-dressing or transsexual identity are not, because they are relatively few. We report a 23-year follow-up of the case of a transvestite, possibly transsexual, man who killed his mother by strangulation at the age of 20, and later in two separate cases strangled a female victim towards whom he felt sexual desire. He reported being sexually aroused by being strangled himself. The case raises questions concerning legislation which does not allow lifetime control of criminals.


Author(s): Dogan, Kamil Hakan, Demirci, Serafettin, Serafettin, Deniz, Idris, Erkol, Zerrin

Citation: Journal of Forensic Sciences, March 2010, vol./is. 55/2(542-545), 0022-1198;1556-4029 (Mar 2010)

Abstract: Dismemberment of a corpse has always been viewed by society to be a more hideous crime than the homicide itself. In this study, we present a case of a 57-year-old woman who was decapitated and her right arm and both hands were dismembered. It was determined that the victim was murdered and dismembered by her 33-year-old daughter, who had been receiving treatment for schizophrenia for 15 years. On the victim’s head and back there were 71 incised and stab wounds in total. They were superficial, except the five stab wounds which were connected to the right chest cavity and which incapacitated the victim. Although there is not a regulation for the act of dismembering the corpse in the Turkish Penal Code, since
this type of case is rare, the crime scene and the autopsy findings were evaluated together with other pertinent data available in the literature.

4. **Matricide: A critique of the literature.** (U.S study but the results may be similar to those in UK)

   **Author(s):** Heide, Kathleen M, Frei, Autumn

   **Citation:** Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, January 2010, vol./is. 11/1(3-17), 1524-8380;1552-8324 (Jan 2010)

   **Abstract:** Matricide, the killing of mothers by their biological children, is a very rare event, comprising less that 2% of all U.S. homicides in which the victim-offender relationship is known. This manuscript examines more than 20 years of U.S. homicides to determine the age and gender characteristics of matricide offenders. These data reveal that most mothers are killed by their adult sons. Daughters younger than 18 years are the most infrequent killers of mothers. This article examines the incidence of parricide, the involvement of sons and daughters in matricidal incidents, and synthesizes the literature in terms of offender gender. Special attention is given to female matricide offenders, given the lack of research currently available with respect to this population. Implications for practice, policy, and research are discussed.

5. **Infanticide, matricide or suicide.**

   **Author(s):** Minne, Carine

   **Citation:** British Journal of Psychotherapy, May 2009, vol./is. 25/2(194-202), 0265-9883 (May 2009)

   **Abstract:** This chapter gives an account of a young woman suffering from a personality disorder who killed her baby and her psychoanalytic psychotherapy treatment in high security over several years. The focus is on three main areas. Firstly, the severity of her family dysfunction, especially her relationship with her own mother, gradually emerged in the course of treatment and this led to the infanticide also being viewed as a suicidal or even matricidal act as the patient's identifications with mother and baby altered repeatedly. Secondly, the course of treatment also raised particular countertransference difficulties with this patient who was, at times, extremely hostile and occasionally violent during sessions and these are also described. Lastly, prognostic expectations and hopes for patients with this degree of disturbance are reviewed.

6. **Matricide: Primal aggression in search of self-affirmation.**

   **Author(s):** Holcomb, William R

   **Citation:** Psychiatry: Interpersonal and Biological Processes, 2000, vol./is. 63/3(264-287), 0033-2747;1943-281X (Fal, 2000)

   **Abstract:** Three theories of matricide are presented and critiqued using epidemiological data, case studies, and descriptive research. The strengths and weaknesses of psychoanalytic theory, family systems theory, and cognitive behaviorism in explaining matricide are described. The social-interaction theory of violence and, in particular, self-affirmation motive is presented as the most helpful perspective for understanding murder of the mother. This review covers those
concepts within psychoanalysis, cognitive behaviorism, and family systems theory that have historically been used to understand matricide and is not a critique of modern psychoanalysis, cognitive behaviorism or family systems theory. It is noted that matricide occurs in less than 1% of all homicides. Offenders are heterogeneous in their characteristics with at least 3 different types. Most prominent characteristics across matricide types are severe mental illness, a domineering mother, a hostile-dependent relationship with the mother, a passive or withdrawn father, and over kill behavior. Self-affirmation motive suggests several interventions to prevent violence against the mother or its equivalents. The author makes several conclusions about the nature of human aggression and family dysfunction.

Another non-UK study but you might be interested in the findings:

7. **Matricides in South Australia - a 20-year retrospective review.**

**Author(s):** Wick R, Mitchell E, Gilbert JD, Byard RW

**Citation:** Journal of Forensic & Legal Medicine, April 2008, vol./is. 15/3(168-71), 1752-928X;1752-928X (2008 Apr)

**Abstract:** A 20-year retrospective review of files at Forensic Science SA, Adelaide, Australia was undertaken for cases of matricide occurring between the years 1985 and 2004. A total of 11 cases were identified: 10 males and 1 female. The victims were aged between 42 and 83 years (mean=61 years) and the perpetrators were aged between 15 and 53 years (mean=28.7 years). In all 11 cases weapons such as blunt objects (N=5), knives (N=5), firearms (N=3), or ligatures (N=1) were involved in the assaults, with injuries inflicted by the weapons causing death in 10 cases. In five cases trauma was caused by more than one injurious agent/action; e.g. there was evidence of immersion and burning in two cases. In four cases there were multiple (>10) significant injuries inflicted by perpetrators suffering from schizophrenia (N=2), 'mental impairment' (N=1) and a 'combination of psychiatric disorders' (N=1). One perpetrator committed suicide after killing his mother. Six of the ten surviving perpetrators were found not guilty of murder on the grounds of mental illness or impairment, and one perpetrator had the charge reduced from murder to manslaughter due to underlying mental conditions that included previous brain injury. Matricides are uncommon forms of homicide that have similar features in most communities studied. Intra-familial tensions with underlying psychiatric illness in the perpetrator are common findings.

8. **Matricide by person with bipolar disorder and dependent overcompliant personality.**

**Author(s):** Livaditis MD, Esagian GS, Kakoulidis CP, Samakouri MA, Tzavaras NA

**Citation:** Journal of Forensic Sciences, May 2005, vol./is. 50/3(658-61), 0022-1198;0022-1198 (2005 May)

**Abstract:** Matricide is an infrequent form of homicide. This paper is to present a case of matricide with typical characteristics of the act but interesting particularities as well. The perpetrator was a 43-year-old man, respected member of his community, with over compliant characteristics, eagerness in serving people and caring his parents, good social adaptation before and after the crime. He abandoned his family and work in order to better serve his old, disabled but over demanding mother who frequently insulted and humiliated him. Suddenly he came to a state of
“mental confusion” and strangled her. After the crime, the perpetrator manifested the symptoms of a bipolar disorder and also received the diagnosis of dependant personality disorder. Years later, he presented again a crisis of escalating aggressive urge for which he was hospitalized. Many people and associations of his hometown actively demanded the minimal possible punishment for him. The case is discussed especially concerning: a) hypotheses about the aetiopathogeny of the act, b) the constant support provided to the perpetrator by his family and social environment.

9. **Adolescent sexual matricide following repetitive mother-son incest.**

**Author(s):** Schlesinger LB

**Citation:** Journal of Forensic Sciences, July 1999, vol./is. 44/4(746-9), 0022-1198;0022-1198 (1999 Jul)

**Abstract:** A case of a 16-year-old male who committed a sexual matricide following years of mother-son incest is reported. After murdering his mother by strangulation, which itself was sexually arousing, the youngster engaged in both vaginal and anal necrophilia. The homicide occurred while the perpetrator was in a dissociative state and experiencing what has been referred to as a catathymic crisis: the sudden release of emotionally charged psychic conflict and tension, resulting in extreme violence within an interpersonal bond. Discussion of maternal image and maternal sexual conduct in relationship to the psychosexual development of adolescent males offers insight into the motivation in this extremely rare case.

10. **Matricide: the schizophrenic crime?.**

**Author(s):** Clark SA

**Citation:** Medicine, Science & the Law, October 1993, vol./is. 33/4(325-8), 0025-8024;0025-8024 (1993 Oct)

**Abstract:** The aim of the study was to further examine the view that matricide is 'the schizophrenic crime' (Gilles, 1965). This report represents a comprehensive, retrospective and national study of all individuals in Scotland who, between 1957 and 1987 inclusive, were charged with the murder or the culpable homicide of their biological mother. Files of High Court indictments were examined for the relevant years to identify offenders prior to disposal, and individuals were followed up with respect to diagnosis and disposal. Twenty-six (twenty-three men and three women) were convicted of the murder or culpable homicide of their biological mother. Only 50 per cent (thirteen subjects) were known to the State Hospital, Carstairs. Six (24 per cent) subjects suffered from schizophrenia, seven (24 per cent) were given no diagnosis, five (20 per cent) suffered from personality disorder, four (16 per cent) from the alcohol dependence syndrome, three (12 per cent) from depressive illness, and one (4 per cent) from hypomania. Thus, whilst schizophrenia is over-represented in this subgroup of offenders, matricide should not be viewed as the schizophrenic crime. Given the prevalence of mental disorder in this group, pre-trial assessment by a Forensic Psychiatrist should be mandatory.

11. **Who commits matricide?.**

**Author(s):** Singhal S, Dutta A

**Citation:** Medicine, Science & the Law, July 1992, vol./is. 32/3(213-7), 0025-8024;0025-8024 (1992 Jul)
Abstract: The authors studied sixteen men who committed matricide. Fifteen out of sixteen cases had a diagnosis of schizophrenia and the remaining patient had a diagnosis of schizophrenia with personality disorder. All were single at the time of the matricide. Data indicate an intense conflict-laden and ambivalent relationship between the majority of patients with their mothers. Thirteen out of sixteen cases described their mothers as quite domineering and demanding but the EMBU inventory revealed that the Matricidal group differed from the Control group in how tolerant they saw their parents. The sample as a whole saw mothers were more over-involved, overprotective, tolerant, affectionate, stimulating, performance-orientated and shaming. The matricidal group differed from the control group in the way they viewed the difference between mother and father on various scales, like over-involved, tolerant, affectionate and performance-orientated. The matricidal groups' mothers were found to be more over-involved, tolerant, affectionate, and fathers more abusive. Mothers in the control group were more performance-orientated.

12. Women who kill their parents.

Author(s): d'Orban PT, O'Connor A

Citation: British Journal of Psychiatry, January 1989, vol./is. 154/(27-33), 0007-1250;0007-1250 (1989 Jan)

Abstract: The literature on parricide is reviewed with special reference to women. Seventeen female parricides (14 matricides, 3 patricides) were identified: in a remand prison (11), a Special Hospital (5), and a Regional Secure Unit (1). Six were schizophrenic, five had psychotic depression, three had personality disorders, and one was alcoholic. Two of the patricides had no psychiatric disorder but retaliated against violent fathers. Regardless of psychiatric diagnosis, matricides were mostly single, socially isolated women in mid-life, living alone with a domineering mother in a mutually dependent but hostile relationship. Similar characteristics are found in male matricides, who are predominantly schizophrenic. It is suggested that these features are of greater significance in matricide than the specific form of psychiatric disorder. Compared with filicides, matricides were significantly older, were single, and more often suffered from mental illness and substance abuse. Attention is drawn to the possible homicidal risk associated with delusions of poisoning and hypochondriacal delusions.

13. Children who kill: a case study of matricide. (A bit old!)

Author(s): Mouridsen SE, Tolstrup K

Citation: Journal of Child Psychology & Psychiatry & Allied Disciplines, July 1988, vol./is. 29/4(511-5), 0021-9630;0021-9630 (1988 Jul)

Abstract: Only a small number of children who murder have been reported in the literature. Matricide in particular is infrequently mentioned. The examination and treatment of a 9-yr-old boy who intentionally killed his mother is presented. No severe family conflicts or other psychogenic factors which could explain the action were found. Apart from some indications of possible epilepsy in the EEG (not confirmed clinically) no somatic pathology was verified. During one year's stay in the child psychiatric department after the homicide the boy was psychotic, probably suffering from a schizophrenic disorder which is presumed to have developed in the years preceding the matricide.
If I search on Matricide and Comparative study – this is all I get – a Canadian study:

14. **Parricide: a comparative study of matricide versus patricide.**

**Author(s):** Bourget D, Gagne P, Labelle ME

**Citation:** Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry & the Law, 2007, vol./is. 35/3(306-12), 1093-6793;1093-6793 (2007)

**Abstract:** Between 1990 and 2005, 64 parents were killed by their children in the province of Quebec, Canada. The authors reviewed all consecutive coroners' files on these cases and found that 27 mothers and 37 fathers were the victims of parricide. The sample included 56 perpetrators: 52 sons and 4 daughters; 9 cases of double parricide were found. Approximately 15 percent of the perpetrators (8/56) attempted suicide following the parricide. A psychiatric motive (stemming from depression or psychotic illness) was determined for 65.5 percent (36/56) of the perpetrators, and 67 percent of them had a psychotic disorder. Similarities and differences were found between cases of matricide and patricide.

The following articles may be of interest. They are not specifically on Matricide:

15. Homicide convictions in different age groups: A national clinical survey

**Hunt, Swinson et al**


16. **A population-based study of juvenile perpetrators of homicide in England and Wales.**

**Author(s):** Rodway, Cathryn, Norrington-Moore, Victoria, While, David, Hunt, Isabelle M, Flynn, Sandra, Swinson, Nicola, Roscoe, Alison, Appleby, Louis, Shaw, Jenny

**Citation:** Journal of Adolescence, February 2011, vol./is. 34/1(19-28), 0140-1971 (Feb 2011)

**Abstract:** This study aimed to describe the social, behavioural and offence characteristics of all convicted perpetrators of homicide aged 17 and under; to examine their previous contact with mental health services, and to discuss strategies for homicide prevention. An eight-year (1996-2004) sample of 363 juvenile homicide perpetrators in England and Wales was examined. The majority of perpetrators were male, used a sharp instrument, and most victims were acquaintances or strangers. Over half had previously offended. A history of alcohol and/or drug misuse was common, as was the prevalence of family dysfunction, abuse, educational difficulties or discipline problems. Previous contact with mental health services was rare. Earlier intervention targeting social and psychological adversity and substance misuse could help to reduce the level of risk for future violence, and may reduce homicide rates among juveniles. Strengthening engagement with young offenders and increasing resources to prevent recidivism may also be beneficial

17. **Family violence: What's in a name?**

**Author(s):** Moloney, Lawrie
Abstract: In this special edition of Journal of Family Studies (JFS) discusses the articles that focus on men as clearly defined perpetrators and women and children as clearly defined victims. One of the article points out the traditional feminist critique of violence grew out of an appreciation by pioneer researchers that many of the women seeking refuge from violent situations were indeed victims whose partners or husbands were motivated by a need to keep them 'under control'. Thus since the 1970s much of the theorizing about violence has been about men's sense of entitlement, driven in turn by an essentially patriarchal culture. This theorizing remains an important part of the picture. But a growing body of research based on population studies rather than clinical samples, has pointed to the existence of widespread female-initiated violence, as well as widespread reciprocal violence between men and women. My aim in raising this issue is not to enter formally into these debates - and certainly not to somehow diminish the lived experience of the victims of violence and abuse. It is extremely important that we both hear the stories of victims and hear their understanding of the causes and impact of violence.

18. **Violence perpetration and childhood abuse among men and women in substance abuse treatment.**

Author(s): Burnette, Mandi L, Ilgen, Mark, Frayne, Susan M, Lucas, Emma, Mayo, Julia, Weitlauf, Julie C

Abstract: Despite an association between violence perpetration and substance use, the characteristics associated with violence among patients in treatment for substance use disorders (SUDs) are not well documented. Data were gathered from a national sample of men (n = 4,459) and women (n = 1,774) entering SUD treatment on history of violence perpetration, exposure to childhood physical abuse (CPA) and childhood sexual abuse (CSA), and reasons for entering treatment. Rates of violence perpetration were high (72% of men, 50% of women), and violence was associated with being referred by family members, prior SUD treatment, CPA, and CSA. In multivariate analyses, CPA was a significant correlate of violence perpetration across gender; however, CSA was only significant among women. Findings highlight the need for increased screening and treatment of violence perpetration among patients with SUD and suggest that CSA may be an important correlate of violence perpetration among women.

19. **Effects of perpetrator and victim gender on negative outcomes of family violence.**

Author(s): Howells, Nicolette L, Rosenbaum, Alan

Abstract: Growing up in a violent home predisposes children to a host of behavioral and emotional difficulties. This study examined whether perpetrator and victim gender have an impact on depressive symptoms and aggressive behavior for victims of child physical abuse (CPA) and also with regard to witnessing
interparental violence (IPV). This study also examined whether witnessing siblings being abused would elicit high levels of depressive symptoms and aggressive behavior.

20. **Mental Health Correlates of the Victim-Perpetrator Relationship Among Interpersonally Victimized Adolescents.**

**Author(s):** Lawyer, Steven R, Ruggiero, Kenneth J, Resnick, Heidi S, Kilpatrick, Dean G, Saunders, Benjamin E

**Citation:** Journal of Interpersonal Violence, October 2006, vol./is. 21/10(1333-1353), 0886-2605;1552-6518 (Oct 2006)

**Abstract:** This research examines mental health correlates of different victim-perpetrator relationships among adolescent victims of interpersonal violence. A large and nationally representative sample of adolescents (N = 4,023) responded to structured telephone interviews concerning mental health functioning (posttraumatic stress disorder–PTSD, major depressive disorder, substance abuse/dependence, and delinquency). Those reporting histories of sexual (n = 321) and/or physical (n = 688) assault were queried about specific aspects of their assaults, including their relationship with the perpetrator. After controlling for demographic- and assault-related risk factors, the victim-perpetrator relationship remained a significant risk factor for mental health problems. Adolescents sexually assaulted by nonstrangers were at increased risk for PTSD; those sexually assaulted by acquaintances or people they did not know well were at increased risk for delinquency. Adolescents who were physically assaulted by a family member were at increased risk for PTSD. Explanations for the findings and the need for consistent assessment methods across related studies are discussed.