

EXAMINATION OF KNIFE CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN

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Abstract

Violence against women is a serious and a widespread social problem in the world. Numerous research studies have examined this phenomenon and its reasons and results. However, knife crimes against women have not been adequately investigated. This particular type of violence is the most serious and the deathly one. For instance, hundreds of women were killed by their husbands or boyfriends in the last decade in Turkey, and the knives are the most preferred crime tool in these cases. This research study examined knife crimes against women. The data were collected from police departments in a middle-sized city, which has a population around 800,000. All of the recorded knife crime cases were collected as data for a ten-year period between 2002 and 2012. The data consist of 3.050 knife crime cases and 12.757 individuals involved in these cases. Of all these cases 514 were committed against women. The demographics of victims, the date, time and location of cases, type of knives, type of wounds, location of wounds, relationship between suspects and victims, and reasons behind use of knives were investigated. It is presumed that findings from the study can help better understand knife crime against women and generate effective solution to minimize the crime rate.

Keywords: Knife Crime, violence against women, police, Turkey

Introduction

Violence against women is a serious and a widespread social problem in the world. Notwithstanding race, nationality and ethnicity this particular type of violence is seen in every country. It is seen in advanced countries such as the USA, UK, Canada and Australia (Boyle et al., 2006; Gibbons, 2011; Krug et al., 2002) as well as in advancing countries such as Romania, India, Spain, Egypt, Georgia, Kenya, Israel and New Zealand (Babu and Kar, 2009; Korkut-Owen and Owen, 2008; Krug et al., 2002; Stickley, Kislitsyna,

Timofeeva and Vagerö, 2008; Vachher and Sharma, 2010). According to the World Health Organization's (WHO) report (2002), approximately 53 million women are victims of violence in a year in the world. Researchers report almost 1/3 of women in the world experience physical type of violence (Baumgarten and Sethi, 2005; Krug et al., 2002). Violence against women is a widespread problem in Turkey as well. Numerous research studies have indicated that women are victims of violence in every region of Turkey without any exclusion (Akar et al., 2010; Altınay and Arat, 2007; Ayrancı, Günay and Ünlüoğlu, 2002; Güler, Tel and Tuncay, 2005; Kocacık and Çağlayandereli, 2009; Korkut-Owen and Owen, 2008; Naçar et al., 2009; Tanrıverdi and Sıpkın, 2008; Gül, 2013). Because crime statistics are not recorded and analyzed correctly (Polat and Gül, 2010), the size of violence against women problem is bigger. It can be summarized from these studies that similar to the common proportion in the world, averagely 1/3 of women experience at least one type of violence in their life in Turkey.

Violence against women threatens its victims' life and health. One of the major reasons of death for women from an age group between 16 and 44 is violence against women, which causes death more than traffic accidents (Griffin and Koss, 2002; Korkut-Owen and Owen, 2008). In addition, violence against women generally results in wounds on different parts of victims, bone breaks, organ losses, unwanted pregnancies and venereal diseases. Victims of violence against women become psychologically unhealthy, depressed, shy, frightened and sometimes alcoholic and drug addict (Akar et al., 2010; Atman, 2003; Torres et al., 2010; Vachher and Sharma, 2010). Moreover, all these damages cause some sociological results. Victims lose their self-confidence to fulfill their roles in family such as to be a good wife or a mother (Kocacık and Çağlayandereli, 2009). Also, within a chain effect, victims' children, parents, relatives, neighbors and whole community are affected directly or indirectly from results of violence against women (Subaşı and Akin, 2012).

In addition to these damages, violence against women consumes national wealth like a black hole. Violence against women requires new investments and expenses in different areas such as health, security, justice and municipality. The annual financial damage caused by violence against women is calculated around 40 billion dollars for the UK (Akar et al., 2010).

One of the major problems with violence against women is that these cases happen behind closed doors most of the times and victims do not tend to report the cases (Medaric, 2011; Naçar et al., 2009). When this is taken into account, it can be said that the actual number of violence against women cases must be bigger and the potential damages must be enormous.

When compared with the past, fortunately many countries have become more conscious, prepared, meticulous and devoted about violence

against women and to solve the problem today (Altınay and Arat, 2007; Kocacık and Çağlayandereli, 2009; Medaric, 2011; Salaçin, Ergöner and Uyaniker, 2009). Societies also have obtained more awareness about the problem (Tonsing and Holloway, 2010). Moreover, the number of research studies examining violence against women has increasing continuously. Numerous research studies have examined this phenomenon and its reasons and results. However, knife crimes against women have not been adequately investigated. This type of violence is the most serious and the deathly one (CNNTURK, 2013). For instance, hundreds of women were killed by their husbands or boyfriends in the last decade in Turkey, and the knives are the most preferred crime tool in these cases (Haberdesin, 2011; Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformu, 2012). This current study addressed the investigation of this particular type violence against women. It is assumed that findings from this study can help better understand knife crime against women and generate effective solutions against it.

Literature Review

An individual's use of power resulting in damages or losses on his or her own body and others' bodies is defined as violence (Subaşı and Akın 2012). A violent behavior includes fierce, hardness, harshness, rudeness, constraint, restriction and inhibition (Atman, 2003). The purpose of a violent behavior is to reach a goal or to obtain a benefit in general (Akpolat, 2010). If an individual is restricted to fulfill this purpose, he or she can select use of violence. Individuals who are not successful enough to solve conflicts by communication choose to use violence (Broussard and Northup, 1995). Between two sides who perceives himself or self stronger than other, attempts to use violence on the other side.

When it comes to violence against women, it is defined like that violent behaviors such as harshness, rudeness, constraint, restriction and inhibition used against women resulting in pain and physical, physiological and generical damages or losses (Khan, 2004). More than 95% of the perpetrators of violence against women are men who are husbands or boyfriends (Akar et al., 2010; Delice, 2013a; Delice and Teymur, 2013).

Violence against women is classified under four different groups: physical, physiological, generical and financial violence against women (Gibbons, 2011; Tanrıverdi and Sıpkın, 2008; WHO, 2005). Physical violence includes slapping, punching, kicking, pushing, burning, throwing solid items, and use of knives and guns. Physiological violence includes threatening, swearing, continuously criticizing, insulting, mocking, over jealous and restricting communications with her parents or friends. Generical violence includes raping, intercourse by force, being watched pornography by force and skepticism. Finally, financial violence includes forbidding her

making money, taking her money by force, managing her money and restricting her spending money.

To explain violence against women two basic theories is generally used, which are the feminist theory and the family systems theory. According to the feminist theory, violence against women emerges because of the physical and strength differences between two sexes (Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Mehrotra, 1999; Raj 2002; Straus and Gelles, 1986). Because of these differences, men have become dominants and women have been restricted in every facets of life (Medaric, 2011). In this paternalistic structure, men are in charge in families and women has to obey (Eng, Mulsow and Fischer, 2010; Tonsing and Holloway, 2010). Men might see use of violence on women as a right and women are more vulnerable and less self-confident in this type of communities (Babu and Kar, 2009). Any objection to a husband or a rejection against a husband's request for an intercourse for instance might be a sufficient reason for violence against women (Stickley et al., 2008). Moreover, women are inclined to tolerate violence against them and they do not tend to report cases to officials (Tonsing and Holloway, 2010). To report cases is perceived as a shame for families or a betrayal to husbands (Gill, 2004). In accordance with the theory, research studies showed that violence against women is more frequently seen in this type of communities (Eng et al., 2010; Kocacik and Çağlayandereli, 2009). Findings from a research study indicated that victims of violence against women can only tell the event to their parents or close friends because they are afraid of being isolated by the community in Ethiopia (Kedira and Admasachewb, 2010). Similarly in Turkey, it is found that victims frequently conceal the events because of being shy, self reproaching and even to protect their husband (Altınay and Arat, 2007). Findings also showed that 40% of women in Turkey think that bad cooking, objection to husbands, rejection intercourse request of husbands and wasting money might be sufficient reasons for violence against women (Naçar et al., 2009).

The family systems theory is the second theory frequently used to explain violence against women. According to the theory, a family is a system and composed of several subsystems. Violence against women emerges because of malfunctions within subsystems or between subsystems (Bograd, 1988). One of the major malfunctions might be experiencing of violence, learning violence, use of alcohol or drug and lack of self-control (Tonsing and Holloway, 2010). Beginning from childhood individuals shape their behaviors in accordance with what they see, experience and learn in family, school, workplace and different areas of life (Backman and Secord, 1974). The same procedure works for obtaining violent behaviors. If individuals, particularly children, see and experience violent behaviors, they

espouse, learn and tolerate violent behaviors and they behave violently (Akar et al., 2010; Kocacık and Çağlayandereli, 2009; Tonsing and Holloway, 2010). Media plays a critical role in this learning process. The woman stereotype presented in TV series, movies and advertisements is conducive to learn about violent behaviors against women (Kocacık and Çağlayandereli, 2009). Findings from the research studies support the theory. It is found that if a male individual saw or experienced violence in his childhood, he is more likely to use violence on his wife or girlfriend (Akar et al., 2010; Altınay and Arat, 2007). If a female individual saw or experienced violence in his childhood, she is more likely to use violence on her children and to tolerate violence used against her (Kocacık and Çağlayandereli, 2009; Naçar et al., 2009; Vahip and Doğanavşargil, 2006). In addition, as the theory presumes it is found that alcohol and drug addicts more frequently use violence on their wife or girlfriends (Akar et al., 2010; Naçar et al., 2009). This also is true for gamblers (Naçar et al., 2009). Finally, most of the men who are alcohol addicts do not see violence against women as an important problem (Stickley et al., 2008).

In addition to these theoretical explanations, it might be helpful to know about demographic characteristics of individuals involving violence to better understand violence against women. A great number of research studies have showed that violent behaviors are most likely fulfilled by younger male individuals (Kızmaz, 2002; Subaşı and Akın 2012; WHO, 2002). There is a close relationship between age and behaving violently, in which aging makes individuals less violent (Çetin, 2004; Karakaya, 2008). Findings have showed that approximately 50% of the suspects of violence against women cases are from the 26-40 age group (Delice, 2013a; Delice and Teymur, 2013).

Although some researchers posit a relationship between level of education and behaving violently, this relationship is not clear as the relation between age and behaving violently. Some findings have indicated that women who have lower level of education are more likely to experience violence by their husbands or boyfriends (Ex: Altınay and Arat, 2007; Babu and Kar, 2009; Naçar et al., 2009; Stickley et al., 2008). On the contrary, some studies have obtained adverse findings (Ex: Kocacık and Çağlayandereli, 2009). Some others have not found any effect of level education on violence against women (Ex: Delice, 2013a; Delice and Teymur, 2013; Tanrıverdi and Sıpkın, 2008).

Level of income is another factor related to violence against women. Findings have showed in general that violence against women is more likely to be seen in such families which has lower level of income (Akar et al., 2010; Babu and Kar, 2009; Kocacık and Çağlayandereli, 2009; Naçar et al., 2009; Stickley et al., 2008). Another effect of level of income emerges when

a woman has a higher amount of income than man in a family. It is found that the probability of experiencing violence of a woman in such condition is higher twice than others (Altınay and Arat, 2007).

A knife crime against women is a particular type of violence against women, which is hardly investigated in the literature. Knife crimes include killing, wounding, threatening and robbing with knives. Because of a number of reasons, knives are preferred by perpetrators (Delice, 2013b). For instance, knives are easily available and obtainable. Many type of knives can be purchased and carried without any legal restrictions. Knives can be easily disguised under clothes and they do not make sound taking attention while using. Many individuals have a habit of carrying knives, which conducive to use of these knives in any conflicts between two parts (Brown and Sutton, 2007). Knife crime is one of the major reasons of death, and approximately 40% of all homicide cases are related to knife crimes (Kieselbach, 2011; Spiegelhalter and Barnett 2009). Knife crimes are widespread in Turkey as well. Of all the emergency service cases, almost 5% are composed of injuries caused by knife crimes (Beyaztaş, 2011). Findings showed that knives were primary crime tools caused death in 57% of all the homicide cases in a middle sized city in Turkey (Gürer, 2011). It is also found that police stations recorded more than 3,000 knife crimes cases and more than 12,000 individuals related to these cases in 10 years in the city of Erzurum, which has population around 800,000 (Delice, 2013b). Of all these 3,000 cases 1% resulted in death and 83% resulted in wounds.

There is sufficient evidence to believe that knife crimes are widespread and cause many casualties. On the other hand, it is not clear enough how women involve these cases. The literature stressed that a small number of both suspects and victims of violent crimes are women (Barletta, 2003; Dağdelen, 2003; Demirhan, 2002; Kızmaz, 2002). However, it is not known adequately what the dynamics of these cases are.

It is clear from the abovementioned explanation that violence against women happen in a great numbers in all over the world. Because knives are frequently used crime tools, it can be predicted that they are also used against women in some of these cases. According to France Interior Ministry, which corroborates the prediction, 148 women were murdered by their current or ex-husbands and 75% of these women were killed using knives or guns (CNNTURK, 2013). Similarly in Turkey, 4,374 victims of violence against women applied for police protection because of threatened by death, and 2,048 of these applications were approved (Gazetegüncel, 2013). In the first 11 months of 2011, 245 women were murdered by men in Turkey, and around 50% of these homicides committed by using knives (Haberdesin, 2011). Likewise, the Platform against Women Homicide reported the proportion of homicides in which knives were the primary crime tools as

33% (Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformu, 2012). It seems that meticulous investigation of knife crimes against women is an urgent need in order to understand dynamics of this crimes and generate effective solutions. This current study aimed to respond this need.

Method

In this study a secondary data set, which was collected for a comprehensive research study about knife crimes by Delice (2013b), is used. All records concerning knife crime cases were collected from police departments of a middle-sized city, Erzurum, which has a population around 800,000 for a ten-year period between 2002 and 2012,. There were 3.061 knife crime cases in total and 12.757 individuals were involved in them as suspects, victims or witnesses. To obtain data for this study, these cases were filtered twice. At the beginning, knife crime cases in which women were either suspects or victims or witnesses were identified. Then, from these cases, only those in which women were victims were selected. At the end, 514 knife crime cases which included 557 female victims were chosen and investigated. Descriptive statistics were used for analysis. Date, time and location of these crimes, demographics of their victims, relationship between their victims and suspects, types and locations of the victims' wounds, types of the knives used by the suspects, and reasons behind why the suspects used knives were thoroughly analyzed.

Results

Table 1 shows the positions of each sex in knife crime cases. Females constituted 9% of all persons involved in knife crime cases as suspects, victims and witnesses; 6% percent of all suspects; 6% percent of all witnesses and 18 % of all victims. This finding indicates that probability of a woman being the victim in a knife crime case is much higher than the probability of her being a suspect or a witness.

Table 1: Positions of Sexes in Knife Crime Cases

Position	n	Men		Women	
		n	%	n	%
Suspect	8222	7705	94	517	6
Victim	3669	3102	82	557	18
Witness	178	168	94	10	6
Total	12069	10985	91	1084	9

N=12069

It is found that while the percentage of women in all individuals was 9%, the percentage of women involved in these cases was %24.2 (514 women involved knives crime cases in all 3061 cases). This percentage

differences in case and individual numbers are related to the number of individuals involved in each case, which changes between two and 24. The findings showed that the proportion of the cases involving two individuals is 29%, cases involving three individuals are 23%, cases involving four individuals are 17% and cases involving five and more individuals are 31% (Delice, 2013b). According to these results it can be concluded that cases involving women has fewer numbers of individuals.

The findings indicated that of all these 1084 women, 557 (51.4%) were victims, 517 (47.7%) were suspects and 10 (0.9%) were witnesses. Number of cases which 557 victims were involved in is 514, which indicates that the number of victims is more than one in some cases. Because this study addresses knife crime against women, only 514 cases to which 557 women were involved in as victims, were analyzed.

Table 2 presents the types of victimization. Only 269 victims' data were available for this analysis. According to the Table, a great majority of women (82.9%) were wounded with knives. The percentage of threatened women was 14.5% and the percentage of robbed women was 1.1%. Of all the 269 female victims, 4 were murdered with knives.

Table 2: Types of Victimization

Threatened		Wounded		Murdered		Robbed	
N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
39	14.5	223	82.9	4	1.5	3	1.1

N=269

Table 3 shows some characteristics of victims such as age, marital status, level of education, migration status, occupation and mental health. A quarter of victims were from the age group 26-35. More than 10% of victims were under the age of 18. Similarly, approximately 10% of victims were older than 55. A great amount of victims (65.4%) were married, 27% were single, 5.3% were widow and 2.3% were divorced. In terms of education level, it is quite remarkable that more than half of the victims were primary school graduates and percentage of illiterate victims is also quite high (15.3%). The percentage of undergraduate victims was only 5.6%. According to the findings 35.2% of victims migrated to the city. While 25% of victims have a job, 75% do not. Findings also show that only 3 victims had mental illnesses and only 6 victims were under the effect of alcohol when the event happened.

Table 3: Characteristics of Victims

Variable	N	%
Age (M = 34.6, SD = 14.3)		
18-	63	11.5
18-25	112	20.4
26-35	145	26.4
36-45	118	21.5
46-55	62	11.3
56-65	35	6.4
66 +	15	2.7
Marital Status		
Single	131	27.0
Married	318	65.4
Divorced	11	2.3
Widow	26	5.3
Level of Education (n = 301)		
Illiterate	46	15.3
Literate	14	4.7
Primary School Graduate	164	54.5
High School Graduate	60	19.9
Undergraduate	17	5.6
Migration		
Yes	183	35.2
No	337	64.8
Occupation (n = 432)		
Have a job	108	25.0
Do not have a job	324	75.0
Under the effect of Alcohol (n = 297)		
Yes	6	2.0
No	291	98.0
Mental Illness (n = 380)		
Yes	3	0.8
No	377	99.2

N = 557

Knife crime against women cases' distribution by year, season, day and hour were shown in Tables 4,5,6 and 7 below. According to Table 4, the number of knife crimes against women gradually increased starting from 2002, and made peak in 2008. After this year, it started to decrease. In terms of the distribution by season shown in Table 5, it can be said that a greater number of knife crime cases against women took place in spring & summer. According to Table 6, highest number of knife crimes against women occurs

on Sundays and Wednesdays respectively. The number of cases occurred on other days seems to be close to each other. Table 7 reveals that number of knife crimes against women begin to rise between 06.00 and 10.00 AM in the morning, make peak between 06.00 and 10.00 PM and decline after 10.00 PM till 06.00 AM.

Table 4: Knife Crime against Women Cases’ Distribution by Year

2002		2003		2004		2005		2006		2007		2008		2009		2010		2011	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
36	7.0	27	5.3	49	9.5	44	8.6	63	12	42	8.2	86	17	83	16	43	8.4	38	7.4

N = 514

Table 5: Knife Crime against Women Cases’ Distribution by Seasons

Spring		Summer		Autumn		Winter	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
160	31.1	142	27.6	107	20.8	105	20.4

N=514

Table 6: Knife Crime against Women Cases’ Distribution by Day

Sunday		Monday		Tuesday		Wednesda		Thursday		Friday		Saturday	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
91	17.7	70	13.6	61	11.9	86	16.7	69	13.4	74	14.4	63	12.3

N=514

Table 7: Knife Crime against Women Cases’ Distribution by Hour

02.01-06.00		06.01-10.00		11.01-14.00		14.01-18.00		18.01-22.00		22.01-02.00	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
4	0.8	47	9.1	90	17.5	144	28.0	160	31.7	59	11.7

N=504

Table 8 shows general and Table 9 shows specific locations of the cases. Majority of the cases (90%) took place in urban areas. Knife crimes against women were committed mostly on streets (48.9%) and in dwellings (34.2%).

Table 8: General Locations of Cases

Urban		Rural	
n	%	n	%
466	90	48	10

N=474

Table 9: Specific Locations of Cases

Streets		Dwelling		Workplac		Schools		Bazaars		Others	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
229	48.	160	34.	23	4.9	16	3.4	10	2.1	30	3.3

N=466

According to Table 10, authorities learned about knife crimes against women mostly through 911 calls (75.6%) and applications to police stations (14.8 %). 6.4% of the cases are reported by hospital police who routinely check the work in emergency services to see if the patients are suspects or victims of a crime. Patrol officers reported only 3.2% of the cases. Table 11 shows that 62.5% of cases were witnessed by third party individuals. This percentage explains why 911 is the primary way that authorities learn about knife crime incidents.

Table 10: Reporting Cases

911		Applying Pol. Sta. Directly		Hospital Police		Patrol Officer	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
353	75.6	69	14.8	30	6.4	15	3.2

N=467

Table 11: Presence of Witnesses

Yes		No	
n	%	N	%
253	62.5	152	37.5

N=405

The relationship between victims and suspects and the type of the relation are shown in Table 12 and Table 13 below. Findings from the tables show that 81.3% of victims and suspects had a relationship & were acquainted with each other before the event. When it comes to types of relationships, 32.9% of suspects were husbands, 23.2% were boyfriends, 22.4% were relatives and 13.2% were neighbors. Findings from Table 14 show that majority of the sides of the events (90.5%) were not involved in a similar case together before.

Table 12: Relationship between Victims and Suspects

Yes		No	
n	%	N	%
408	81.3	94	18.7

N=502

Table 13: Types of Relationship

Husbands		Boyfriends		Relatives		Neighbors		Others	
n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%	n	%
119	32.9	84	23.2	81	22.4	68	13.2	10	2.8

N=362

Table 14: Involvement in Similar Cases Before

Yes		No	
n	%	N	%
31	9.5	295	90.5

N=326

Table 15 and Table 16 explain reasons behind using knives and events before using knives. The most prominent reasons behind knife crime against women were arguing and swearing each other, women’s declaration of intent to divorce and men’s infidelity allegations against women. Findings also show that before most of the knife crimes against women took place, arguing, swearing and physical contact between suspects and victims happened.

Table 15: Reasons behind Using Knives

Arguing-Swearing		Decision to Divorce		Alleged for Infidelity		Business Conflict		Robbery		Others	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
162	38.2	117	27.6	80	20	28	6.6	27	6.4	10	2.5

N=424

Table 16: Events before Using Knives

Arguing		Swearing		Physical Contact	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
90%	10%	64%	36%	80%	20%

N=405

Table 17 shows that 52.1% of the suspects arrived in crime scenes to confront with the victims. On the other hand, almost half of the suspects did not plan to confront with the victims before the event. However, Table 18 indicates that, whether the suspects arrived to crime scenes intending to confront with victims or not, almost 70% of the suspects used knives intentionally. In other words, after arriving to crime scenes, a combination of reasons presented in Table 15 and events in Table 16 must have triggered the intention to use knives against victims.

Table 17: Arrival to Crime Scenes

Planned		Not Planned	
n	%	n	%
239	52.1	220	47.9

N=459

Table 18: Intention to Use Knives

Yes		No	
n	%	N	%
336	69.6	147	30.4

N=483

According to Table 19, 60.3% of the suspects intended to hurt victims by using knives and 28.9% of the suspects intended to frighten victims. Besides these major purposes, 4.2% of the suspects intended to threaten, 2.1% intended to kill, 1.9% intended self-defense and 1.7% intended to rob. Findings from Table 20 indicate that suspects attempted to stab victims many times, starting from 1 to 9 times. In half of the cases suspects attacked just once. Table 21 shows that numbers of stabbing attempts and numbers of wounds inflicted on the victims have similar patterns. It seems that each and every attempt of suspects for stabbing were successful.

Table 19: Purposes of Suspects

Frightenin		Threateni		Hurting		Killing		Defending		Robbing	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
137	28.9	20	4.2	286	60.3	10	2.1	9	1.9	8	1.7

N=474

Table 20: Number of Stabbing Attempts (max. = 9)

1		2		3		4		5		Others	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
87	50.9	26	15.2	12	7.0	23	13.5	8	4.7	15	8.8

N=171

Table 21: Number of Wounds (max. = 7)

1		2		3		4		5		Others	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
158	60.8	64	25.0	18	6.9	13	5.0	4	1.5	2	0.8

N=260

Table 22 shows locations and Table 23 shows types of wounds. More than half of the wounds were inflicted on victims’ hands, legs and arms. The percentage of wounds on faces was 12.2%, on heads was 7.0%, on bellies was 5.2% and on backs was 4.7%. When it comes to types of wounds, a great majority of wounds (63.8%) were defined as cut. Almost 20% of wounds were defined as scratches and 14.4% were defined as stabbings. A small amount of wounds (3.9%) were defined as bruises.

Table 22: Locations of Wounds

Hands		Legs		Arms		Face		Head		Belly		Back		Others	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%	n	%	n	%
85	21.2	83	20.7	65	16.2	49	12.2	28	7.0	21	5.2	19	4.7	51	12.3

N=401

Table 23: Types of Wounds

Bruise		Scratch		Cut		Stabbing	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
10	3.9	46	17.9	164	63.8	37	14.4

N=257

Table 24 presents the types of knives used against women. The table shows that a great amount of suspects used pocket and kitchen knives respectively. Many suspects (21.1%) preferred machetes and some type of a sword peculiar to Turkey. Only a few suspects used switchblades and butterfly knives, which are illegal to carry. Table 25 shows that most of the suspects (70.5%) had a habit of carrying knives. Rest of the suspects, with an exception of 3% minority, obtained knives from where they live.

Table 24: Types of Knives

Pocketknife		Kitchen Knife		Machete-Sword		Switchblade		Butterfly		Others	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
139	36.2	124	32.2	81	21.1	19	4.9	10	2.6	11	2.8

N=384

Table 25: Ways of Obtaining Knives

Carrying		Home		Others	
n	%	n	%	N	%
227	70.5	85	26.4	10	3.0

N=322

Finally, Table 26 shows positions taken by the suspects concerning allegations against them after the events. According to the table, only 38% of the suspects accepted allegations implying that they committed those knife crimes. Similarly, only 53% of suspects regretted what they did.

Table 26: Suspects' Positions after the Incidents

Accept Allegations		Regret	
Yes	No	Yes	No
38%	62%	53%	47%

N=250

Discussion

VAW is a serious and widespread social problem all over the world. Governmental and non-governmental organizations have been spending a lot of effort to tackle with it for a considerable amount of time. A great number of research studies have examined VAW to understand its causes and consequences in an effort to generate effective solutions. However, particular forms of VAW, including knife crimes against women, have been hardly investigated. Using knives is popular, particularly among young individuals, causing serious bodily wounds and sometimes deaths (Beyaztaş, 2011; Gürer, 2011; Kieselbach, 2011; Spiegelhalter and Barnett 2009). Knives are frequently used against women to kill or hurt them (CNNTURK, 2013; Gazetegüncel, 2013; Haberdesin, 2011). This current study investigated knife crimes against women in Turkey. In a middle sized city, 514 knife crime cases were recorded in police stations in a 10 year period between 2002 and 2012 and 557 female victims of these cases were investigated. The characteristics of the cases and the victims were analyzed from different perspectives.

Findings show that the number of female victims was three times higher than the number of female suspects in 3061 knife crime cases in the city, which indicates that women are more likely to be the victims of knife crimes. Knife crimes involving a female side generally include just one suspect. More than half of the suspects were husbands and boyfriends. This finding is cohesive with the literature which stressed that the most prominent perpetrators of violence against women are husbands and boyfriends (Akar et al., 2010; Delice, 2013a; Delice and Teymur, 2013). When 22.4% of the suspects from relatives are taken into account, it can be said that almost 80% of knife crimes against women are domestic violence cases. Although suspects had close relationships with victims, it seems like they did not hesitate to injure, threaten or even kill them using knives.

According to the findings, victims of knife crime against women might be from any age group including children. However, 18-45 age group, which includes almost 70% of the victims, can be accepted as the risk group. The age distribution of victims of knife crime against women is similar to the age distribution of victims of violence against women (Delice, 2013a; Delice and Teymur, 2013). In addition, the literature stressed that younger individuals are more likely to be victims of violence (Brown and Sutton, 2007; Jamieson, 2005; Kieselbach, 2011; Spiegelhalter and Barnett 2009).

Findings show that almost three quarters of victims were illiterate, barely literate or primary school graduate. It seems like these findings confirm the discussion in the literature that women with a low level of education are more likely to be victims of violence (Altınay and Arat, 2007; Akar et al., 2010; Babu and Kar, 2009; Naçar et al., 2009; Stickley et al.,

2008). However, when we look at general population's level of education in the city of Erzurum, it is clear that the pattern of victims of knife crime is similar to the pattern of general population in the city in terms of level of education. Of all the individuals in the city, 10% are illiterate, 9% are barely literate and 45% are primary school graduate (TÜİK, 2011). Moreover, proportion of women in these groups is quite higher than men (TÜİK, 2011). These statistics can be interpreted like that women with a low level of education might become victims of knife crime as well the women with a higher level of education might.

Similar inferences can be made concerning the findings about migration and occupation. Findings show that 35.2% of victims migrated to the city and only 25% of victims have a job. On the other hand proportion of immigrant individuals in the city is 60% (Bora, 2012) and proportion of employed women in Turkey is 25%. Standing with this statistics it can be interpreted that migration and occupation are not effective factors to explain knife crime against women.

According to the findings, knife crime against women more frequently occur between 03.00 and 11.00 PM, on Sundays and in springs and summers, supporting the findings from earlier studies (Gürer, 2011; Yılmaz, 2011). It is a fact that people are biologically more energetic and have greater amount of interaction with family members during these periods. These findings support the approaches which explain crimes depending on people's routine activities and environmental conditions such as weather (Hipp, Bauer, Curran and Bollen, 2004; Rotton and Cohn, 2003).

Findings show that the number of knife crimes against women in urban areas is nine times higher than the number in rural areas. This finding supports the idea that dynamics of urbanization increase the number of crimes (Subaşı and Akin 2012) and crime rate is typically four times higher in urban areas than rural areas (Levitt, 1998).

Findings also show that approximately half of the knife crimes against women cases took place on streets in the presence of third party individuals and police learned about these incidents mostly from 911 calls. It can be inferred from these findings that suspects did not care about being seen by other individuals; however, these individuals willingly reported the cases to the police. The police could learn about only 3% of these cases by patrolling; therefore, citizens' willingness to inform police about ongoing or completed crimes seems important.

According to the findings, arguing, swearing and physical contact between couples triggered the use of knives. That is why; training about anger management for both sides might be an effective solution. Besides arguing and swearing, women's declaration of intent to divorce and men's infidelity allegations against women are motivating factors for suspects.

These findings indicate the existence of a paternalistic structure where suspects cannot respect their partners' decisions and want their partners obey what they decide to do. Findings also show that almost half of the suspects did not regret to what they did. In other words, they believe the victims deserve the punishment they decided.

According to findings, despite fact that almost half of the suspects came to crime scenes without any intention to use knives against victims or to hurt them, they were triggered by the abovementioned reasons to use knives. After making the decision, majority of the suspects intend to hurt victims. Findings show that the majority of the suspects attacked with knives once or twice, and similarly majority of the victims suffered one or two wounds. It can be inferred from these findings that suspects were successful in their each attack to fulfill their intentions. In addition, it seems like they were conscious and did not lose their control while using knives. If so, they would not stop after one or two attacks.

Findings concerning the locations of wounds show that most of the wounds took place on victims' hands, legs, arms and faces respectively. Wounds on hands, arms and faces can be explained as "victims wanted to defend themselves using their hands and arms". Besides, hands, arms and faces are targets that can be reached easily. When it comes to legs, suspects might have targeted victims' legs on purpose because reaching victims' legs requires extra effort. Stabbing legs is typical in the sense that some suspects want to punish victims by stabbing without causing major damages and legs are the most suitable places on a body for this purpose (Delice, 2013b).

Findings concerning the knife types show that a great majority of the suspects preferred to use knives which are easily accessible, namely pocketknives and kitchen knives. Turkish laws do not prohibit purchasing or carrying these types of knives. Earlier studies had similar findings related to the types of knives used in knife crimes (Yılmaz, 2011). Findings also show that almost three quarters of the suspects were already carrying knives before using them in the incidents. Having a habit of carrying knives encourages individuals to attack and defend themselves with knives (Stolzenberg, 2000; Brown and Sutton, 2007). This habit has a strong potential in increasing the number of knife crimes.

Acting on the findings of this study, several suggestions can be made to minimize the number of knife crimes against women. First, legal sanctions against carrying and using knives should be increased. It is pointed out that when legal sanctions against carrying and using knives are strengthened, knife crime rates go down (Stolzenberg, 2000). Second, awareness raising programs for all citizens concerning the women's rights and the harms associated with violence against women should be implemented. For comprehensive improvements, education system should be the first target.

Relevant government sectors such as security, health and justice should be more conscious about violence against women and work together very closely to deal with it (Akar et al., 2010; Baird, Gregory and Johnson, 2011; Johnson 2010; Kocacık and Çağlayandereli, 2009). Third, relationship between citizens and governments should be strengthened. If citizens trust their governments, they are less likely inclined to solve conflicts using their own methods (Stephen, 2009). Mutual trust also motivates citizens report crimes to the relevant government authorities.

This current study investigated an important social phenomenon and reached valuable findings. However, because of several limitations, these findings should be interpreted cautiously. First, the data were collected in only one city for a ten year period. Second, the data consists of police records, typed by police officers. Third, because each police department recorded the data following a different standard, there were considerable amounts of missing data valuable for analysis.

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