

Original Article

## Evaluation of female forensic cases reported due to assault in the forensic medicine polyclinic in 2023

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### Abstract

**Aim:** One of the most common case groups encountered in health institutions is forensic cases. In acts of assault, which is one of the judicial cases, the way the act occurs, the progress process and the effect on the person as a result of the incident vary depending on sex. In our study, it is aimed to determine the characteristics of female forensic cases referred to us due to assault in 2023, such as their age, the type of action, the clinical result of the victim as a result of the to determine the causes and consequences of the assault and to reveal the precautions to be taken.

**Materials and Methods:** Female judicial applications referred to our department due to assault action within a 1-year period between 01.01.2023 and 31.12.2023 were included in the study. 29 final reports, court files and forensic examination documents were retrospectively reviewed. Information such as the season in which the incident occurred, age, type of action, clinical outcome, and localization of the injury on the body were classified and coded into the SPSS 27.0 program and analyzed. Descriptive statistics and frequency tables of the data were created and compared.

**Results:** When the cases were divided into age groups; it was seen that 96.6% were between the ages of 18-65, 82.8% of the cases were referred due to assault, the most common perpetrators of the assaults were the husband of the victim (20.7%).

**Conclusion:** In order to prevent the assault from taking place, both women and men should be educated from a young age, both through the education curriculum and communication channels. The paths to be followed after the assault has taken place should be communicated to every woman in a clear and understandable manner.

**Keywords:** Forensic medicine, woman, assault

### INTRODUCTION

One of the most common case groups encountered in health institutions is forensic cases. Any unnatural case is evaluated as a forensic case. A forensic phenomenon is a person experiencing health problems due to an environmental effect. Preparing a forensic report is a task that both therapeutic and preventive medicine perform together [1]. Article 280 of the Turkish Penal Code (TPC) states that "A health professional who, despite encountering an indication that a crime has been committed while performing his duty, fails to report the situation to the competent authorities or delays in doing so shall be punished

with imprisonment of up to one year" [2]. In this regard, the physician must also evaluate each patient who examined from a forensic perspective.

Differences arising from gender affect every area of social life, as well as the way in which legal events occur, the process of progress and the impact on the person as a result of the event. For example; while work accident cases are more common in men, suicide cases due to drug intake are more common in women. [3]. In assaults, the way the verb occurs, the progress process and the effect on the person as a result of the event change depending on the sex [4].

### CITATION

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The most common type of injury in our country, regardless of gender, is traffic accidents [3-6]. After traffic accidents, assaults, falls from heights, gunshot wounds, sharp object wounds, burns and electric shocks, animal injuries, suspected abuse cases and suicide cases are also frequently seen. [4,7].

The act of assault often appears as physical violence, gunshot wounds or stab wounds. World Health Organization (WHO) data show that nearly 1 in 3 (30%) of women worldwide have experienced violence, whether physical, sexual or both, in their lifetime [8]. Women mostly encounter violence for the first time through their family, friends and social environment [9]. The most common murder weapon used in femicides is firearms [10]. Assault is defined in Article 86 of the TPC as "intentionally causing pain to another person's body or causing their health or perception to deteriorate" [2].

In our study, it is aimed to determine the characteristics of female forensic cases referred to us due to assault in 2023, such as their age, the season in which the incident occurred, the type of action, the clinical result of the victim as a result of the incident and the localization of the injury on the body, to determine the causes and consequences of the assault and to reveal the precautions to be taken.

**MATERIAL AND METHOD**

With the permission of the "İnönü University Health Sciences Non-Interventional Clinical Research Ethics Committee" decision number 2024/6910, female forensic cases who admitted to "İnönü University Faculty of Medicine, Department of Forensic Medicine" due to assault within a 1-year period between 01.01.2023 and 31.12.2023 were included in the study. Assault types were evaluated as physical violence, gunshot wounds and stabbing injuries. If a case is in the category of both physical violence and gunshot wounds, both types of injuries are included in separate tables. 29 final reports, court files and forensic examination documents were retrospectively reviewed. Files for which a report had been previously prepared but for which a new report had been requested by the judicial authorities, files for which a new report had been prepared after additional documents had been obtained, and files for patients whose files had been submitted to us but who had not come for examination, or for whom there had been problems in obtaining missing documents even if they had been examined, were excluded from the scope. In order to evaluate the different effects of traumas on individuals and the correlation of the degree of these effects with age, the age range of 1-18 for children, 18-65 for adults, and 65 and above for the elderly, based on the data of the Turkish Statistical Institute, was used [11-13]. While examining the marital status of the victims, their marital status on the date of the incident was compared with their marital status on the date of the research. The possibility of a second marriage was considered a limitation of our study. Information such as the season in which the incident occurred, age, type of action, clinical outcome, localization of the injury on the body, and marital status of the person were classified and coded into the SPSS 27.0 program and analyzed. descriptive statistics and frequency tables of the data were created and compared.

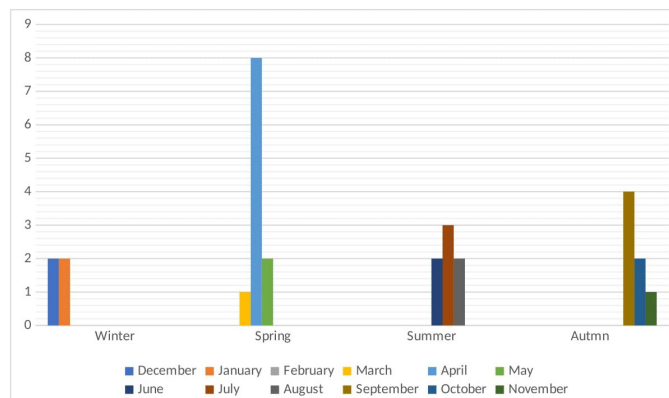
**RESULTS**

It was determined that the youngest age of the 29 female cases in the study was 13 years old, the oldest age was 64 years old, the average age was 36.76 years old, and the standard deviation was 14.21. When the cases were divided into age groups, it was seen that 3.4% were under the age of 18, 96.6% were between the ages of 18-65, and there were no cases referred to us due to assault over the age of 65 (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Age groups

	Count (n)	Percent (%)
<b>18&lt;</b>	1	3.4
<b>18-65</b>	28	96.6
<b>Total</b>	29	100.0

It was determined that the most cases referred to us due to assault (27.6%) occurred in april, and no female gender cases were referred to us due to assault in february (Figure 1). When seasonal assessment was made, it was seen that the most applications were made in the spring season due to assault (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Season-month

It was understood that 82.8% of the cases were referred due to physical violence, 6.9% were referred due to firearm injuries, and 3.4% were referred due to sharp object injuries and burns (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Type of assault

	Count (n)	Percent (%)
<b>Phsiycal violence</b>	24	82.8
<b>Firearm injuries</b>	2	6.9
<b>Sharp object injuries</b>	1	3.4
<b>Burns</b>	1	3.4
<b>No data</b>	1	3.4
<b>Total</b>	29	100.0

When the anamnesis and statements of the female cases referred to us due to assault were examined, it was seen that the most frequently identified perpetrators of effective action were the victim's husband (20.7%), and the identified perpetrators were largely close male relatives (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Perpetrator

	Count (n)	Percent (%)
<b>Father</b>	1	3.4
<b>Husband</b>	6	20.7
<b>Fiance</b>	1	3.4
<b>Son</b>	1	3.4
<b>Brother/Sister</b>	1	3.4
<b>Stranger</b>	1	3.4
<b>Friend</b>	1	3.4
<b>Mother</b>	1	3.4
<b>Unknown</b>	16	55.2
<b>Total</b>	29	100.0

**Table 5.** Report result

		Simple medical intervention		Total	
		Sufficient	Insufficient		
<b>Life-threatening</b>	<b>Exist</b>	Count (n)	0	1	
		Percent of total (%)	0.0	3.4	
	<b>Absent</b>	Count (n)	24	4	28
		Percent of total (%)	82.8	13.8	96.6
<b>Total</b>	Count (n)	24	5	29	
	Percent of total (%)	82.8	17.2	100.0	

## DISCUSSION

In our country, according to a study conducted by the General Directorate of the Status of Women in 2014, the rate of women who stated that they had been subjected to physical violence at some point in their lives was 39% in 2008, 36% in 2014, and 8% in the last 12 months. In other words, approximately four out of every 10 women are subjected to physical violence by their husbands or intimate partners [14-17]. In a study conducted in 2016, Büyükyılmaz et al. determined that 1627 of 2071 women who were subjected to violence were between the ages of 26-59 and 444 were 25 years old and under [18]. In a study conducted in Adana province in 2019, Yavuz et al. found that the average age of female forensic cases was 35.9, 74.7% of them were exposed to blunt trauma by someone else, 1.7% were exposed to cutting-piercing tool injuries, 1.1% were exposed to firearm injuries, and the perpetrator of 70.5% of the cases was the victim's husband, followed by her son, father, older brother, and younger brother, respectively [19]. In a study conducted in Manisa province in 2021, Karabağ et al. found that in cases of effective acts against women, the perpetrator was most often the spouse, fiancée or lover of the victimized woman with 47.2%, that these incidents usually occurred in the homes of the victims, and that in effective acts, women were more likely to be exposed to blunt trauma rather than firearms and sharp-edged tools, which are more likely to pose a threat to life [20]. In our study, it was determined that

When the current marital status of the women referred to us for assault was examined, it was seen that 48.3% were currently married, 31% were single, and 6% were married at the time of the incident but are currently divorced (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Marital status

	Count (n)	Percent (%)
<b>Married</b>	14	48.3
<b>Single</b>	9	31.0
<b>Divorced</b>	6	20.7
<b>Total</b>	29	100.0

It was observed that 82.8% of the female cases referred to us for assault had simple injuries, while 3.4% had life-threatening injuries (Table 5).

the average age was 36.76, that the most common application was made due to physical violence among the assaults, and that applications were made after sharp object injuries and firearm injuries at low rates. We believe that the reason for this situation is that women who are victims of violent acts are more likely to be exposed to spousal or partner violence, that there are differences between the society's perspective on violence and other types of injury among violent acts, and that socio-cultural factors are effective in the type of action the perpetrator will take.

Ersöz's 2011 study found that domestic violence and divorce rates were correlated [21]. According to the 2023 data of the Turkish Statistical Institute, the number of divorces per 1000 population [crude divorce rate] is 2,01 [22]. In our study, it was determined that 6 of the 29 women who were exposed to the assault act were divorced. We believe that this situation is consistent with the study conducted by Ersöz and that violence and divorce rates are related.

In a study conducted in Manisa in 2019, Aykır found that 1.8% of female forensic cases applying for assault were in mortal danger, 78.1% were not in mortal danger, 58% had injuries that could be resolved with simple medical intervention, and 10.1% had injuries that could not be resolved with simple medical intervention [4]. In our study, it was determined that 3.4% of the women who applied for assault were in mortal danger and 82.8% of their injuries could be resolved with simple medical

intervention. Yavuz et al. found that 5.8% of women exposed to physical violence had bone fractures, 2.8% had life-threatening injuries, 87.6% had minor injuries, and 6.4% had injuries that were not minor [19] The results are similar. We believe that the reason for this situation is that the most common application is for physical violence among the assaults, the act of physical violence is most often applied to female victims by their partners, and the act of physical violence is used as a punishment method with socio-cultural effects.

## CONCLUSION

Assault against women constitutes a significant portion of violence against women, which is a significant public health problem. While there are assault acts that are recorded upon application to official institutions, there are also assault acts that are not recorded and have not been applied to official authorities due to socio-economic and cultural effects. Assaults towards women are usually performed by men in the woman's close circle. In order to prevent the action from taking place, both women and men should be educated from a young age, both through the education curriculum and communication channels. The paths to be followed after the action has taken place should be communicated to every woman in a clear and understandable manner. In order to eliminate the socio-economic and cultural effects that prevent making official applications and to purify women individuals from elements of fear, the number of official or private civil society organizations such as the 183 family, women, children and disabled social service hotlines, violence prevention and monitoring centers, provincial social services directorates, women's counseling centers, women's shelters, which are currently active, should be increased, these services should be brought to even the smallest settlements and their functioning methods should be explained.

Health institutions are usually the first point of contact for assaults against women. Health workers should be given repetitive training on the issues of recognizing the event, the sensitivity to be shown in diagnosis and treatment, and the process to be carried out after treatment, and the care to keep records and report for the soundness of the judicial process.

Assault actions against women are carried out in a wide range. In solving this problem, every criterion should be examined in detail, short-term and long-term plans should be put forward, and all authorized institutions related to law, health, education and family should be in communication and act together.

### Conflict of Interests

*The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in the study.*

### Financial Disclosure

*The authors declare that they have received no financial support for the study.*

### Ethical Approval

*İnönü University Health Sciences Non-Interventional Clinical Research Ethics Committee decision number 2024/6910.*

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