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Infanticide in Women Who Are Victims of Domestic Violence

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Infanticide is a worldwide troubling phenomenon as well as in Russia. Forensic psychiatrists found out that domestic abuse against women is often one of the main causes of crimes of violence in women.

Aims: To find out clinical and social factors contributing to specific female crime - infanticide.

Methods: clinical, psychological, statistical.

Results: A cohort of 12 females who had killed their children was examined. All women were victims of violence by their husbands or partners. Domestic abuse resulted in long-term mental problems of women. Clinical assessment has revealed depression, anxiety, fear, post traumatic stress disorder, alcohol abuse.

Women of the sample who had committed infanticide displayed pathological altruistic motivation of the crime. Alongside with clinical factors the research had revealed also social factors of infanticide. Women were often exposed to psychogenic situations with high level of stress (financial and housing problems, violence of the partner). In accordance with the Criminal Code of Russia the special article (106) governs infanticide. This law takes into account the psychogenic situation which caused the crime (battered women syndrome) and the fact that at the time of the child murder the mental state of mother was affected by childbirth.

Conclusion: In cases of infanticide the court is free to make verdict more lenient and its reflects more humane approach to such complicated phenomenon as child murder.

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