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**Forensic Nursing, The New Breed Of Nurses**

**By Larry Ford**

With the continuing rise in crime rates, forensic nursing is quickly becoming a popular part of the American judicial system. Forensic nursing is one of the newest forms of forensic sciences recognized by the American Nurses Association. The new field combines the health care profession with the judicial system.

Nurses trained in forensic nursing are needed to quickly and appropriately gather evidence that can be used in a court of law. Along with gathering forensic information, they also testify in trials of their jurisdictions.

The appeal of forensic nursing is mainly with victims of violence. Multiple people are seeing victims, social workers, doctors, the police etc. This can be hard on the victim. Having one expert that can do everything from start to finish including going to trial would make it a lot less stressful for the victim.

Because forensic nursing is such a new and growing specialty, it offers great opportunities for recent nursing graduates and experienced RN's looking for a career change.

In 1992, approximately seventy nurses gathered together in Minneapolis, Minnesota as the first national convention for sexual assault nurses. This convention led to the founding of the IAFN, the International Association of Forensic Nurses.

Their mission statement was the concept of nurses willing to devote their energy and resources to develop a role in nursing that can have a impact on the future of forensic science and the health care industry.

Forensic nurses practice in many diverse fields. They range from nurses who specialize in domestic violence, emergency trauma, and sexual assault nurse examiners (SANE's), witch SANE's are often the entry point into forensic nursing. Forensic nurses may also serve as legal nurse consultants or attorneys.

The education for forensic nursing vary. Degree programs are available in forensic nursing but are not required for entry into the profession. Certification courses required for the SANE program is a good start.

The employers of forensic nursing specialists vary as well. They include acute healthcare facilities, correctional institutions, county prosecutors, coroner's offices, medical examiner's offices, insurance companies, and psychiatric facilities.

Another opportunity is working independently on a per job basis to all of these employers – starting a forensic nursing business.

The industry of forensic nursing is only getting more and more attractive to nurses that really want to make a difference in the community around them. It's an opportunity for them to help victims of violence and helping the perpetrators of violence to get help.

Larry Ford runs a website providing information for forensic nursing. You can find it at

<http://www.forensicnursingzone.com/>

### **Breaking The Silence – Forensic Nursing**

**By Linda Emerson**

It was in 1992 when the term Forensic nursing was first heard. But what is it exactly? Forensic nursing is a specialty field that deals with the care of crime victims, collecting evidences and providing health care services in the prison system. It is a combined health care and judicial system profession to be precise. International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN) is the official association of forensic nurses established in 1992 by a team of nurses who specialize in sexual assault examination.

#### 1. A Day In The Life

Contrary to popular belief forensic nurses don't spend their day hanging around with corpses. Examining victims of sexual assault and training colleagues how to treat violently injured patients eat up most of these nurses days. Another related job for a forensic nurse is providing counsel to schoolchildren who fired guns.

#### 2. Training

Training as a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner is the entry–level position you need to obtain in order to break into forensic nursing. The nurse should be a Registered Nurse (RN) before being able to complete the specialized training needed to meet the standards of the IAFN. Forty hours of didactics and forty hours of clinical work are also needed. The nurse should be trained in handling and collecting evidences like hairs, fibers and swabs of fluids for DNA testing.

Forensic nursing is not limited to helping rape victims. Forensic nurses also work with other types of interpersonal abuse such as domestic violence, child and elderly abuse, neglect and physiological, as well as psychological abuse. They could also examine victims of near-fatal or fatal traumas like shooting or stabbing.

A lot of forensic nurses work as nurse examiners in the emergency rooms in the hospitals. In cases like shooting or stabbing, the forensic nurse works in collecting bullets and other debris left in the body that will help in the investigation. Removing the clothes the victim is wearing and storing them in a special bags are also some of their duties. They also have to photograph and measure the wounds of the patients. In case the victim dies, the nurse has to work with the medical examiner (ME).

### 3. Other Considerations

Forensic nurses are qualified to testify in court as an expert witness or a fact witness. As an expert witness, the nurse is allowed to give his or her opinions while on the witness stands in order to shed light on the case. On the other hand, as a fact witness, the nurse is only to state the details and answer the questions. A forensic nurse should state the information in an objective manner. It means that he or she should not speak for or against either the victim or the accused. As the duty calls for it, the nurse only has to state the information he or she obtained, not make conjecture about what he or she thinks happened.

### 4. Tools of the Trade

A forensic nurse should also know how to use different tools in order to document what he or she has gathered during the examination or treatment process.

– A digital camera – An Omnicrome – A Coloscope

To date, specialty areas are being related to forensic nursing. This includes a Forensic Nurse Specialist, Forensic Nurse Investigator, Nurse Coroner or what is known as Death Investigator, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE), Legal Nurse Consultant, Forensic Gerontology Specialist, Forensic Psychiatric Nurse and a Correctional Nursing Specialist. Forensic nursing is a growing industry in the field of nursing. More and more nurses are being drawn to it. Nursing schools are also taking notice of this need. Forensic Nurse Programs are now being offered in nursing schools.

For more great nursing related articles and resources check out

<http://www.lookingfornursingschools.com>



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