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The Role Of The SANE – The Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner

By Larry Ford

Studies have shown that less than half of the victims of sexual assault treated in emergency rooms get basic help with information about the risk of pregnancy or emergency contraception to prevent pregnancy.

They have to wait for sometimes up to six hours for treatment, and during this wait, they're told not to eat, drink, or even use the bathroom before they're examined because it might destroy evidence.

By the time of the examination, victims often feel "re-raped" from the treatment by the staff of the emergency room. For this reason, emergency rooms are realizing a need for SANE programs.

SANE's are registered nurses who have specialized training in examining victims of sexual assault. They provide much needed emotional support for victims as well as testify in trials as expert witnesses in the victim's perpetrator's trials.

They have extensive training in forensic evidence collection, expert witness testimony, STD treatment, and pregnancy evaluation. 75% of SANE programs are hospital based, housed in the emergency rooms while 25% are in the community setting at rape crisis centers or health clinics.

The first SANE programs started in the mid 1970's but it wasn't until the late 1980's that the programs got a major growth spurt as they grew more rapidly in the 1990's when localities started to see the benefits of what these SANE programs have to offer. And by 1996, there were approximately 70 programs in existence.

Now, there are at least 280 SANE programs throughout the United States. Nearly all of these SANE programs serve adolescents and adults, and around half serve pediatric patients.

The programs are staffed by RN's and nurse practitioners that conduct forensic exams of victims of sexual assault. They are required by law to report to local law enforcement sexual assaults that may have caused the victim injury.

On the other hand, the victim has the right to decide to have evidence collected and cooperate with law enforcement by providing them with information. After a SANE program is established, most emergency room personnel are relieved by the service that SANE's provide.

Many municipalities are starting to see the need in these much needed programs. They offer a great service to victims by quickly processing forensic evidence and giving emotional support while making their time to wait for examination as short as possible.

As SANE programs get more and more popular, we'll start to see many more of these programs as time goes on and this can only help the victims of sexual violence and help put their perpetrators behind bars so they won't have a chance to hurt anyone else.

Larry Ford runs a website about 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.

The Role Of The SANE – The Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner

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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