

# **Indiana Chapter of the International Association of Forensic Nurses**

## **Position Statement Regarding The**

### **Medical Forensic Examination of Adult/Adolescent Sexual Assault Patients**

---

**15 November 2011**

#### **Statement of the Problem:**

The Indiana Chapter of the International Association of Forensic Nurses (ICIAFN) believes sexual assault patients in Indiana many times do not receive immediate medical forensic care and treatment appropriate to their urgent situation in emergency departments throughout many of Indiana's 92 counties.

In large part, the ICIAFN has determined this is as a direct result of the lack of easily accessible, standardized, up-to-date written materials, resource information, and SANE trained nurses.

#### **Rationale:**

Today, in any country, setting or system, registered nurses are expected to plan for the care of a patient who has been injured through intentional or unintentional acts that involve violence and victimization to include sexual assault. The ICIAFN believes that nurses who receive SANE training, under the educational guidelines set forth by International Association of Forensic Nurses, will be better prepared to provide comprehensive medical forensic care to those who present with reports of sexual assault.

#### **It is the position of the Indiana Chapter of the International Association of Forensic Nurses (ICIAFN) that:**

1. Health care institutions employ trained Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs) in the emergency department. SANEs provide expert crisis intervention, acute care and treatment, evidence collection, detailed documentation, sexually transmitted infection and pregnancy prophylaxis and appropriate referral for follow-up care and counseling for sexual assault patients. The SANE is prepared to provide expert testimony in court as well as serve as the educator for the nursing, medical, legal and lay communities.

2. Recommend healthcare institutions that provide care to sexually assaulted patients require their nurses who perform sexual assault exams to meet the educational requirements set forth by the IAFN. The sexual assault nurse examiner course for adults and adolescent patients is a minimum of 40 hours of course work that yields 40 contact hours/academic credit or national equivalent. Clinical components are completed in addition to the course work and are not calculated as part of the 40 hours. Sexual assault nurse examiner course for the pediatric patients must be a minimum of 40 hours of course work that yields 40 nursing contact hours/academic credit or national equivalent. Clinical components are completed in addition to the course work and are not calculated as a part of the 40 hours. A combination course adult/adolescent and pediatric must be a minimum of 64 hours of course work that yields 64 nursing contact hours/academic credit or national equivalent. Clinical components are completed in addition to the course work and are not calculated as part of the 64 hours.

3. The ICIAFN continues to promote the advancement of registered nurses, who work in settings that provide care to the sexual assault patients. The association recommends that nurses who performing sexual assault exams successfully complete a didactic and clinical component of a SANE course. However, the organization is mindful of registered nurses operating in rural settings where budgetary and personnel constraints may exist, and therefore may not pursue formal SANE education. In these situations the ICIAFN recommends that either a physician perform the medical forensic exam or transfer the patient if stable and patient agrees, to a facility that employs trained SANEs for the medical-forensic examination.

4. The ICIAFN recommends a registered nurse well versed in the **Indiana Guidelines for the Medical Forensic Examination of Adult and Adolescent Sexual Assault Patients** perform the medical forensic exam only if a trained SANE or M.D. is not available or if the patient is unstable or unwilling to be transferred to a facility who employ trained SANEs.

5. The Indiana Guidelines for the Medical Forensic Examination of Adult and Adolescent Sexual Assault Patients serves as a minimum basic standard of practice in order to provide the cornerstone from which to lay a basic foundation of medical forensic education.

These guidelines are not to be construed as a replacement for formal SANE education and training. The guidelines serve as a resource to provide guidance to registered nurses on the medical forensic exam of the sexual assault patient in the absence of a physician or trained SANE. These guidelines are an additional tool available to registered nurses to assist in the care of the sexual assault patient.

## References

American Nurses Association and International Association of Forensic Nurse (2009). *Forensic Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice*. Silver Springs, MD: Nursesbooks.org

Emergency Nurses Association (2010). *Care of Sexual Assault and Rape Victims in the Emergency Department*. Retrieved from <http://www.ena.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/Position%20Statements/SexualAssaultRapeVictims.pdf>

U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women (2004). A national protocol for sexual assault medical forensic examinations: Adults and adolescents. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ovw/206554.pdf>

The International Association of Forensic Nurses (2008). *Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Education Guidelines for the Adult/Adolescent Patient*