What To Expect From A Forensic Medical Examination At The Children's Justice Center

Elizabeth C. Hocker, JD
Shalotta Sharp, RN, SANE-A, SANE-P

Objectives

• Define a forensic medical examination.
  – When should an examination be conducted?
  – Who should perform forensic medical examinations?
  – How is the information used in a court of law?
• Describe the steps of a forensic examination.
• Employ forensic medical examinations in all child abuse investigations.

Child Maltreatment Data - 2007

• 3.2 million referrals to child protective services agencies
  – U.S.: 10.6 / 1000 children
  – MS: 9.1 / 1000 children
  – 62% of these screened in for investigation
  – 900,000 substantiated
• 13% of children experienced more than one type of maltreatment
• 1760 deaths

WHAT IS FORENSICS?

FORENSIC

• LATIN: PERTAINING TO THE LAW
• FORENSIC SCIENCE: SUB-SPECIALTY OF SCIENCE RELATING TO THE LAW
• MIDWIVES: FIRST FORENSIC EXAMINERS

Is a Forensic exam the same as a check up?

• The Clinician is a trained professional
• The nurse has specialized training
• This exam takes longer
• The equipment is different
• The questions are more detailed
• The history is CRITICAL
Who May Make a Referral? AND....

What types of cases are referred for forensic medical examinations?

Types of Physical Abuse

- Attorney
- Physician
- Dentist
- Intern
- Resident
- Nurse
- Psychologist
- Social worker
- Child care giver
- Minister
- Law enforcement officer
- Public or private school employee
- Any other person having reasonable cause to suspect that a child is neglected or abused.

What is Sexual Abuse?

- When a child is engaged in sexual activities that he or she cannot comprehend
- A child developmentally or legally is unprepared and cannot consent to sexual activity
- Violates laws or social taboos of society

- Evidence may be collected
- Lab tests may be done
- There is a separate pay source for this exam
- Judicial interaction
  - Youth Court
  - Criminal Court

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Can be contact or non contact

- Non Contact
  - Watching Pornography
  - Watching another person touch themselves
  - Exhibitionism
  - Voyeurism
  - Filming or photographing children for pornography

Contact

- Stroking
- Licking
- Penetrating
  - Anally
  - Vaginally
  - Orally

There is a difference between sexual play and sexual abuse!

- Kids like these parts!

How do we learn a child has been abused?

- Disclosure
- Witnessed
- Behavioral Signs
- Physical Symptoms

What Do We Need To Know

- Complete a referral form
  - This is our map that guides the exam!
  - Who, what, when, where?
  - Tell us about the patient.
  - Has there been a forensic interview—what was disclosed?
  - Has there been a prior medical exam?

Is all this necessary?

- Was there fellatio?
  - Special attention to the oral cavity
- Where drugs involved?
  - Testing of body fluids
- Is there a discharge?
  - Cultures will need to be collected
- Was there a traumatic injury?
  - Possible healed or healing areas, scars
- Is there previous photography?
  - There may be congenital findings

http://cjc.umc.edu
What happens to the Report?

- Peer review of exam findings
- Results to the referring entity
- Review in Multi-Disciplinary Meetings
- Testify at Court

What if this is an EMERGENCY?

Acute: An assault WITHIN the past 72 hours

Chronic: An assault more than 72 hours ago.

RUSH HEALTH SYSTEMS

Children's JUSTICE CENTER
Gathering Information

- Take a good history
- Head to toe assessment
- Developmentally appropriate questions
  - "Tell me more......then what happened?"
- Minimal distractions
- Do not show strong reactions--Neutral

Collecting a sexual assault kit
Systematic Collection

- Alternative Light Source
- Body swabs
- Hair Samples
- Saliva and Blood Samples
- Collection of Clothes, Linens

CONTINUATION OF EXAM

- Test for STI's and Pregnancy
- Prophylaxis treatment
- Kits are turned over to law enforcement
- Follow up with specialized clinic
- Re-Test for STI’s
- Re-Test for Pregnancy

ALL ABUSE IS INVESTIGATED

- Physical Abuse
- Neglect
- Injurious Behavior

INSPECTION OF THE FRENULUM

MAGNIFICATION

ONLY FOR ADOLESCENTS
FINDINGS AREN'T ALWAYS ABUSE

Differential Diagnosis

How does this examination help you protect children?
• Begins the healing
• Empowering
• Legally sound
• Medically grounded
  – New subspecialty – Child Abuse Pediatrics
  – Expert versus Lay opinion
  – Evidence based

References
• Johnson. C.F. Child Sexual Abuse, Lancet 2004; 364:462-470
• www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/cmfacts.htm

Further Information
http://cjc.umn.edu/
601.815.0115