

Exams and MDs

SART Listserv August 2007

Background: I have been asked to do a lecture about sexual assault to a large group of Emergency Physicians at an educational conference. What would you want every emergency department physician to know?

Responses:

- A brief overview of rape and sexual assault; review any relevant public policy/legislation in your area; review the basic rules of evidence collection; and a review the evidence kit.
- It is useful to tell them ways to be organized in the exam room.
- Dynamics of sexual assault; what it is about; whose fault it is not; the need of the patient for control.
- Not all emergency medical doctors are familiar with the chain of custody. This can lead to procedural flaws, including having non-collectors package the evidence and do the paperwork. Kits can be compromised and called in question.
- I don't know what the focus of the seminar is or what state you are in, but if it is both child and adult sexual assault, many of our ED MD issues have been:
 - Clarification of minors rights to consent to/decline treatment and evidence collection/parental notification.
 - Clarification of child abuse mandated reporting for your state. (I know it sounds basic, for us it has been a big one)
 - The difference between pediatric and child sexual assault exams.
 - The importance of working with a team approach for these cases and what that means for them, or development of a team if none exists.