



## Introduction to Forensic Nursing

### What is a “SANE” nurse

- A sexual assault nurse examiner is a registered nurse who has received advanced training in forensic medicine specific to sexual assault
- Performs forensic medical examination in lieu of physician in most situations according to local/state/federal protocols
- Medico-legal examinations performed that meets the criminal justice standards as well as medical standards

## What is a “SANE” nurse

- A SANE is NOT considered a patient advocate/rape crisis advocate
- SANE must remain un-biased in each examination
- KEY to quality examinations is remaining UNBIASED

## What is an advocate

- Advocates can be community based or government agency based
- Victim’s Witness = government (majority type)
- Community = independent agencies
- Training for advocates:
- 8 to 40 hrs of training on how to compassionately respond to victims of crime

## What is an advocate

- NO medical training
- NO legal authority to dictate exam process
- NO legal authority to provide medical advice
- NO training on contamination of evidence
  
- The Forensic Examiner should control the room

## “Control the room”

- Request advocate to sit in specific area of room that may make the patient feel more comfortable (head of bed)
- Do not allow the advocate to provide information on behalf of the patient. Politely advise the information must come from the patient
- Do not allow the advocate to contaminate any area of the room that interferes with evidence collection

## Advocates

- Advocates provide a more victim centered approach to the examination
- In an advocate's perspective: EVERY patient has been sexually assaulted and is a survivor
- Consider legal implications to this mentality for a Forensic Examiner
- Scenarios:
  - -Fabricated story
  - -Thinking the patient is lying

## SANE

- Primary objective: perform an unbiased medical assessment to patients presenting post report of sexual assault to perform forensic medical assessment and examination with documentation of injuries and collect swabs where potential DNA may be found

## Medical versus Legal Exam

- Considered mix of both medical and legal examination but primary objective is medical assessment and documentation of injuries and forensic findings
- Exam conclusions to assist law enforcement in investigation and prosecution in the judicial process

## Scope of Practice

- Key objective for Forensic Examiners:
- Obtain quality questionnaire and forensic narrative
- Using narrative/questions to DRIVE your forensic assessment
- Obtaining trace collection based on narrative/questions

## Scope of Practice

- Subjective information gathered in the forensic narrative DRIVES the objective examination
- Use the questions and forensic narrative as a basis on how and where to assess for lesions, findings, DNA swabs

## Scope of Practice

- Connecting the dots!
- Your job is to correlate the patient's history/narrative to forensic findings throughout your exam
- May or may not correlate - It's your JOB to determine that!

## Scope of Practice

- A SANE CANNOT state “yes a sexual assault occurred”
- Consider: patient with broken leg, you as a medical practitioner cannot definitely say “this is how it happened”
- Many people have this misconception
- It is the scope of practice of LAW ENFORCEMENT and the PROSECUTOR that determine if sexual assault occurred

## Scope of Practice

- LE and Pros Office will use your examination to determine factual information/DNA in order to seek a conviction
- The patient and forensic examiner has ONE single shot during the examination to capture the best forensic evidence and assessment possible
- Exams cannot be repeated!

## Scope of Practice

- Your job is to provide the patient an INFORMED decision
- Includes ramifications if a forensic exam is NOT performed
- Bedside RNs DO NOT HAVE THE LEGAL CAPACITY TO PROVIDE THE PATIENT ACCURATE INFO TO DETERMINE CONSENT

## Scope of Practice

- Same as any other medical procedure
  - Conscious sedation
  - Surgery

The SANE is the MD substitute that performs the forensic examination

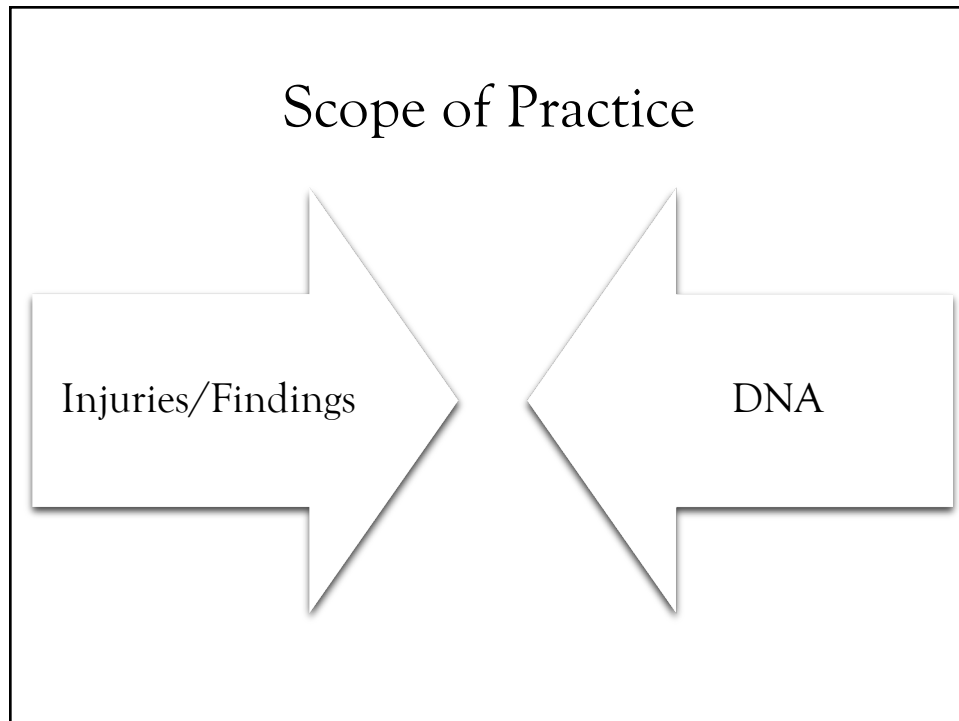
\*\*speculum exams and forensic examinations are out of the scope of a standard RN

## Scope of Practice

- How can a standard RN provide the patient fully informed consent on the forensic best practices
- Failure to perform a forensic exam has the ability to impact the patient's entire life - "he said - she said" in court
- No documentation of injuries, forensic findings, and NO DNA obtained

## Scope of Practice

- SANE job is to determine:
- Injuries consistent or not with patient statement and WHY OR WHY NOT?
- Findings consistent?
- Does the subjective information match the objective information
- THAT IS THE KEY TO FORENSIC NURSING



- ## Scope of Practice
- Finding DNA evidence that is present on the patient
  - Crime labs can now detect even touch DNA transfer
  - Advancement of Forensic Lab testing
    - Touch DNA
    - Semen, saliva, blood, body fluids
    - Other sources

## Scope of Practice

- Using narrative/questions to locate the best possible source of DNA retrieval
- “He grabbed my throat and strangled me”
- Use this as a location to attempt to gather touch DNA

## Scope of Practice

- 96 hour time limit for exams
- > 96 hours, likelihood of DNA limited
- SANE work NOT over if a forensic exam cannot be conducted
- Review of mandated reporting, follow up care provided regardless of exam completed or not

## Scope of Practice

- Provide quality forensic assessment
- Conduct assessment of follow up care needed
- Consult with MD on findings
- COC with law enforcement for kit hand off
- Mandated reporting LE - CPS - APS - ODH
- Expert witness testimony

## Scope of Practice

- Didactic and clinical training are meant to provide you the forensic foundation to have the ability to competently perform a forensic examination
- Tremendous work - YOU CAN DO THIS!
- AUTONOMY - your forensic practice is what you make it.
- SANE of Butler Co will settle for nothing less than the best for our patients

## Scope of Practice

- MAJORITY of this information relayed in training will only be reviewed once. It is encouraged to examine any material you need refreshed on throughout your forensic career
- You are expected to take charge of your own forensic nursing practice
- You get out of forensic nursing what you put into it

## Scope of Practice

- Realistic expectation:
- If the education has been provided to you, it is expected and required that you build upon that foundation and engrain the material into your practice proficiently and expertly

## Scope of Practice

- If you put this material down and do not study it to know and understand the concepts, you will FAIL as a forensic examiner
- This is intense information that is quite involved.
- KNOW IT \_ STUDY IT \_ APPLY IT

Questions?