

## Forensic Nursing in the Emergency Department: The Overlooked Roles

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**Abstract :** The emergency services are usually the first places to encounter forensic cases. Hence, it is important to consider forensics from the perspective of the emergency services staff and the physiological and psychological consequences that may arise as a result of behaviour by itself or another person. Accurate and detailed documentation of the situation in which the patient first arrives at the emergency service and preservation of the forensic findings is pivotal for the subsequent forensic investigation. The first step in determining whether or not a forensic case exists is to perform a medical examination of the patient. For each individual suspected to be part of a forensic case, police officers should be informed at the same time as the medical examination is being conducted. Violent events are increasing every year and with an increase in the number of forensic cases, emergency service workers have increasing responsibility and consequently play a key role in protecting, collecting and arranging the forensic evidence. In addition, because the emergency service workers involved in forensic events typically have information about the accused and/or victim, as well as evidence related to the events and the cause of injuries, police officers often require their testimony. However, both nurses and other health care personnel do not typically have adequate expertise in forensic medicine. Emergency nurses should take an active role for determining that whether any patient admitted to the emergency services is a clinical forensic patient the emergency service with injury and requiring possible punishment and knowing of their roles and responsibilities in this area provides legal protection as well as the protection of the judicial affair. Particularly, in emergency services, where rapid patient turnover and high workload exists, patient registration and case reporting may not exist. In such instances, the witnesses, typically the nurses, are often consulted for information. Knowledge of forensic medical matters plays a vital role in achieving justice. According to the Criminal Procedure Law, Article 75, Paragraph 3, 'an internal body examination or the taking of blood or other biological samples from the body can be performed only by a doctor or other health professional member'. In favour of this item, the clinic nurse and doctor are mainly responsible for evaluating forensic cases in emergency departments, performing the examination, collecting evidence, and storing and reporting data. The courts place considerable importance on determining whether a suspect is the victim or accused and, thus, in terms of illuminating events, it is crucial that any evidence is gathered carefully and appropriately. All the evidence related to the forensic case including the forensic report should be handed over to the police officers. In instances where forensic evidence cannot be collected and the only way to obtain the evidence is the hospital environment, health care personnel in emergency services need to have knowledge about the diagnosis of forensic evidence, the collection of evidence, hiding evidence and provision of the evidence delivery chain.

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