

Quality Improvement Project: Improving Sexual Assault Management & Education for Residents

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Background

- ❖ Sexual assault is defined by the Department of Justice as “any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient.” It is a common and serious public health problem affecting millions of people each year throughout the world; in the US, 40% of women are affected.
- ❖ There are various mental and physical health consequences from sexual assault. Women who have experienced sexual assault have a higher risk of asthma, diabetes, irritable bowel syndrome, headaches, chronic pain, dyspareunia, poor sleep, and overall poor physical and mental health. It is important to identify sexual assault in the population as providing support, treatment, counseling, and referrals could potentially mitigate these consequences.

Purpose

- ❖ Managing victims of sexual assault and rape in the emergency department can be challenging. In many hospitals, a sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) is available to assist physicians with the management of these patients as well with the collection of evidence. However, at Arnot Ogden Medical Center this resource is unavailable. Therefore, residents should become familiar with how to evaluate and manage these patients.
- ❖ Physicians have a large role to play in supporting the victims of sexual assault – medically and psychologically – and collecting evidence to assist prosecutions. This is substantially more effective in hospitals where there are protocols and guidelines for managing cases and collecting evidence, and where staff are well-trained.

Plan/Intervention

- 1) Provide an easy-to-follow algorithm for residents to use when encountering a victim of sexual assault
- 2) Educate residents on how to stabilize patients, provide recommendations for obtaining a medical and assault history, review pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection prophylaxis, and discuss the need for laboratory testing
- 3) Distribute knowledge assessment surveys to residents before and after providing educational materials in order to determine the effectiveness of this sexual assault awareness project
- 4) Create a medication and laboratory order set in the EMR (electronic medical record) to allow ease of use and reduction of errors for residents

- 1) <http://www.emdocs.net/managing-sexual-assault-emergency-department/>
- 2) Amin P, Buranosky R, Chang JC. Physicians' Perceived Roles, as Well as Barriers, Toward Caring for Women Sex Assault Survivors. *Womens Health Issues*. 2017;27(1):43–49. doi:10.1016/j.whi.2016.10.002
- 3) https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/global_campaign/en/chap6.pdf
- 4) <https://www.uptodate.com/contents/evaluation-and-management-of-adult-and-adolescent-sexualvictims>
- 5) Muldoon KA, Drumm A, Leach T, et al. Achieving just outcomes: forensic evidence collection in emergency department sexual assault cases. *Emerg Med J* 2018;35:746-752