



Pathology Biology Section – 2006

G105 Examination of Sexually Abused Child: What is the Impact on Judgment?

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After attending this presentation, attendees will know how the assumption of the possibility of sexual abuse leads almost systematically to a forensic examination. This fact has implications on the health of the victim and the course of the judicial action. However, it is an examination often poor in clinical elements that is used as material proof of abuse. The goal of this study was to try to better understand the contribution of this examination in the legal process.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by attempting to better understand the contribution of the forensic examination when sexual abuse is suspected, and the expected judicial follow-up in sexually abused child affairs.

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A retrospective study on a sample of forensic examinations was carried out on requisition. It concerned 74 children of less than 18 years old, examined between June 1998 and June 2000. With the authorisation of the court of Angers city, the judicial files were consulted on site.

It concerned 58 girls for 16 boys. The average age of the victims at the time of the medical examination was nine and a half years old. In 15 cases there was a history of ill-treatment. For nine percent of the victims, the father had been the subject of a penal judgement with prison sentence.

Nine cases related to acts of sexual improprieties, 58 cases of sexual transgressions and 25 cases of rapes or rapes attempts. In 61 percent of the cases, the victim revealed the facts. In 70 percents of cases, time between the facts and revelations was longer than one month.

The forensic examination did not find any disorder for the great majority of the children. In four cases, it highlighted hymenal damage of which two were assigned to sexual abuse. Forty-two victims underwent a psychological or psychiatric consultation. For two children, their remarks were not recognised credible by the experts.

The total number authors blamed for abuse was 58. Nineteen had already been condemned for sexual abuse. In 26 cases, the father was the abuser. In 43 percent of the files, the authors acknowledged the facts. The courts pronounced the culpability of the authors for 42 victims. It was more frequently pronounced for the female victims (63 %) than for male sex (21 %).

Young girls are mainly the victims. In many cases they are abused by their father or by members of the close family. Forensic examinations did not often reveal cutaneous or genital disorders. The lesions can be fleeting and are often healed. Without bringing material proof, anatomical description makes it possible to come to a conclusion about the feasibility or not of some denounced sexual abuse. Conclusions of forensic examinations, when they partly contradict denounced facts do not call into question the reality of the sexual abuse. In many cases, the author is condemned despite everything. That highlights the importance of investigation and of the child's words.

Sexual Abuse, Child, Forensic Examination