



D25 Imposters: Physical Findings That Can Be Mistaken for Sexual Assault Injuries

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After attending this presentation, attendees will learn how to distinguish between normal conditions, diseases, and injury in the sexual assault victim and apply new knowledge to case studies.

This presentation will impact the forensic community by reviewing existing information and highlighting the importance of distinguishing between normal findings and conditions that are made worse because of injury. Health care providers will use this information for differential diagnosis.

The interpretation of the injury following sexual assault has been challenged in recent literature. Noted physical findings, in particular bruising patterns, may be confused with intentional injury, when they are in fact unintentional. Literature has revealed that injury may occur in consensual relationships and a body of literature exists that describes conditions that will be made worse with penetration that is not forced. The cyclic nature of genital tissue response to estrogen has been established and mid-range theories have been promulgated that explain some injury in the pre-menarchal and post-menopausal females. In addition, complex changes to genital tissue occur with conditions or infections that may or may not be sexually transmitted. Case studies will be presented that are complex and require decision making by the health care provider charged with evaluating the victim of sexual assault. Tools that assign classifications will be introduced to compare and contrast their usefulness in determining whether or not the injury is from sexual assault.

Non-Specific Injury, Blunt Trauma, Specific Injury