



D63 Transformation: Leading Change and the Roles of the Advanced Practice Forensic Nurse

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The goals of this presentation are to demonstrate the roles of the advanced practice forensic nurse, provide examples of the various settings where the forensic nurse practices, describe advancements in forensic nursing education, and explore or demonstrate how interdisciplinary collaboration enhances outcomes in forensic settings.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by demonstrating how nurses work in the collaborative role of a forensic nurse in the multidisciplinary investigative team. They provide insight as experts discriminating between intentional and unintentional injury in individuals and connect appropriate intervention models in clinical situations.

Injury continues to lead in cause of death and disability significantly impacting health care utilization and costs. Historically, medical forensic work was rooted in medical examiners in Europe, with forensic nursing beginning in the United Kingdom in psychiatric and correctional facilities. Expansion spread to North America and Australia in the roles of sexual assault nurse examiners and death investigators through on-the-job training and certificate programs supplementing basic coursework. Forensic nursing education today endorses the theoretical and scientific approach to injury analysis ascribing that intentional injuries are preventable, are predictable, and can be explained through surveillance data collection, syndromic surveillance, and modeling defining the characteristics putting people at risk in order to optimize interventions with optimal outcomes.

In 2008, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the Institute of Medicine (IOM) launched a two-year initiative to respond to the need to assess and transform the nursing profession with the purpose of producing a report that would make recommendations for an action-oriented blueprint for the future of nursing. Four key messages were noted throughout the deliberations culminating in the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) Report, *"The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health"* released in 2010. The committee developed four key messages:

1. Nurses should practice to the full extent of their education and training.
2. Nurses should achieve higher levels of education and training through an improved education system that promotes seamless academic progression.
3. Nurses should be full partners, with physicians and other health care professionals, in redesigning health care in the United States.
4. Effective workforce planning and policy making require better data collection and an improved information infrastructure (IOM).

Forensic nurses have established their place as experts through advanced education, rigorously conducting research, translating evidence-based principles to patient care, and finally, inter-professional collaboration as members of multidisciplinary teams. Expansion of forensic nurse roles is further enhanced by the broad expertise of clinical nurse specialists such as pediatric and psychiatric nurse practitioners, consultants, researchers, and educators. Universities proactively have heeded the call to attain parity with other professions in addition to expansion of existing programs addressing the IOM Report and the National Academy of Sciences Report, *"Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward."*

Advanced education prepares forensic nurses to practice as: consultants to law practices, death investigators who may also serve on fatality review teams, child abuse and elder abuse experts, correctional specialists, forensic trauma practitioners, disaster responders for the living and identification team members for the dead, critical incident stress debrief team members, and forensic psychiatric clinicians, to name a few. Each of these roles requires an understanding of theory, scientific inquiry, applied physical science, biomechanics, and crime scene and evidence collection. Core competencies essential to practice provide the ability to describe and identify injury, access, interpret, use, and synthesize violence data, design and implement prevention activities, and manage injury prevention programs. Researchers and educators develop and disseminate information related to injury risk to the community, other professionals, key policy makers, and stimulate change through policy, enforcement, and education.

Role development of forensic nurses has grown through university curricula for the advanced practice clinician. Their work with victims, perpetrators, systems, and providers globally addresses a need where violence prevention models can impact outcomes in the reduction of violence.

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