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### F34 What's the Law Got to Do With It? Forensics in a Pediatric Health Setting: A Case Report

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand the hard work that is performed at a pediatric health setting, especially in the Emergency Room (ER) unit, when a crime victim arrives or is referred for medical treatment because of her injuries. Attendees will learn how forensic principles are followed by properly trained clinicians and nurses.

This presentation will impact the forensic science and social communities by discussing key aspects of the important role physicians and nurses play in assisting crime victims in their recovery, in the collection and preservation of crime evidence, as primary witnesses of the criminal *modus operandi*, of the victim's direct and immediate statement, and of the health consequences the perpetrator's criminal behavior has on the victim and her family. It is often taken for granted that judges, prosecutors, and defence attorneys should have some training in and knowledge of criminology, criminalistics, legal medicine and crime scene investigation. But, what happens when a gunshot wound victim arrives at the ER or when a drug addict rushes into the ER because of an overdose or when a sexual abuse victim seeks help at a health setting? Are physicians and nurses prepared not only to assist the victim from their own medical and nursing expertise but also to act and assist courts and police forces in gathering and preserving evidence so that the bad guy could be apprehended, brought to trail, prosecuted and sentenced?

Presently, clinical forensics, forensic epidemiology and forensic documentation are an important part of clinicians and nurses' skills in order to assist the victim, to collect and to preserve the evidence, and to act as one of the best reliable witness' court prosecutors, and defense attorneys can find. Physicians and nurses are the very first people a victim arriving at a health setting meets. They can tell firsthand the victim's attitude, fears, and needs. They not only collect physical evidence, but also document the victim's words on the chart. They are trusted people for the victim and her family.

The importance of training health professionals in forensics will be illustrated by a reported sexual abuse case that happened in Buenos Aires Province, Argentina, and that was referred to a pediatric hospital in the City of Buenos Aires. The critical role played by these professionals in collecting and preserving the evidence and as witnesses before the court will be discussed, as will the importance of the clinical chart as documentary evidence. Finally, physicians' and nurses' roles in preventing revictimization, in assuring victim's rights, and in protecting the victim from the stress and guilt that sexual abuse often creates will be discussed. All of this is illustrated in the context of an actual case that provides an example of the practical application of forensic principles and training, as well as the type of legal outcomes and sentences this type of case yields.

Finally, the concept of "Public Health Legal Preparedness" and its application at a pediatric health setting will be discussed.

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#### Forensics, Pediatric Health Setting, Sexual Abuse Victim