



H145 Clinical Forensic Medicine at the Georgia Bureau of Investigation Medical Examiner Office

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Learning Overview: The goals of this presentation are to discuss the history, services, and statistics of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) clinical forensic medicine program and discuss example case details and dispositions of living victim consultations.

Impact on the Forensic Science Community: This presentation will impact the forensic science community by how a clinical forensic medicine program at a medical examiner's office effectively applies forensic science to determine etiology of injuries and assist in legal solutions concerning living victims.

In fatal cases of child abuse and neglect, the office of the medical examiner is responsible for death investigation and autopsy examination to determine the cause and manner of death. Medical examiners are rarely involved in evaluating and interpreting injuries in living victims of trauma. Given their experience and training, they are uniquely qualified to assimilate historical, social, and medical information to accurately assess non-fatal injuries and assist in the investigation of child abuse and neglect.

The GBI Medical Examiner Office (MEO) established a clinical forensic medicine program in August 2000—the Child Abuse Investigative Support Center (CAISC). Recent data reports over 82,000 investigations for child abuse and neglect in Georgia. CAISC provides expert consultation and educational child abuse training to address the needs of agencies in Georgia involved in investigations of child maltreatment.

This study is a review of CAISC providing 18 years of clinical forensic medicine service. The review provides details of the living victim consultations, including age, gender, requesting agency, spectrum of injuries, and opinion of injury causation. Additionally, the data of the educational training is reviewed.

This study updates a previous review of CAISC in 2011, which was prior to the establishment of Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (CHOA) Stephanie V. Blank Center for Safe and Healthy Children. This center is physically based in metropolitan Atlanta, GA, and has a team of board-certified child abuse physicians who conduct evaluations of victims of suspected child abuse and neglect. Child abuse pediatrics has emerged as the clinical specialty that assumes responsibility for assessing injuries in non-fatal suspected child abuse. With this review, CAISC was identified as a valuable resource to: (1) serve agencies in areas of the state that lack the resources and medical expertise that are available in metropolitan areas; (2) provide expertise when comprehensive case information is not available in the acute setting of injury; (3) provide a second opinion in questionable or contentious cases; and (4) provide training opportunities to support state agencies responsible for recognizing and reporting suspicious injuries.

Clinical Forensic Medicine, Living Victim, Child Abuse