

Title:

The Role Of The Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner - A Look Into SANE Programs

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438

Summary:

SANE's are registered nurses who have specialized training in examining victims of sexual assault. They provide much needed emotional support for victims as well as testify in trials as expert witnesses in the victim's perpetrator's trials.

Keywords:

SANE programs, sexual assault nurse examiners

Article Body:

Studies have shown that less than half of the victims of sexual assault treated in emergency rooms get basic help with information about the risk of pregnancy or emergency contraception to prevent pregnancy.

They have to wait for sometimes up to six hours for treatment, and during this wait, they're told not to eat, drink, or even use the bathroom before they're examined because it might destroy evidence.

By the time of the examination, victims often feel "re-raped" from the treatment by the staff of the emergency room. For this reason, emergency rooms are realizing a need for SANE programs.

SANE's are registered nurses who have specialized training in examining victims of sexual assault. They provide much needed emotional support for victims as well as testify in trials as expert witnesses in the victim's perpetrator's trials.

They have extensive training in forensic evidence collection, expert witness testimony, STD treatment, and pregnancy evaluation. 75% of SANE programs are hospital based, housed in the emergency rooms while 25% are in the community setting at rape crisis centers or health clinics.

The first SANE programs started in the mid 1970's but it wasn't until the late 1980's that the programs got a major growth spurt as they grew more rapidly in the 1990's when localities started to see the benefits of what these SANE

programs have to offer. And by 1996, there were approximately 70 programs in existence.

Now, there are at least 280 SANE programs throughout the United States. Nearly all of these SANE programs serve adolescents and adults, and around half serve pediatric patients.

The programs are staffed by RN's and nurse practitioners that conduct forensic exams of victims of sexual assault. They are required by law to report to local law enforcement sexual assaults that may have caused the victim injury.

On the other hand, the victim has the right to decide to have evidence collected and cooperate with law enforcement by providing them with information. After a SANE program is established, most emergency room personnel are relieved by the service that SANE's provide.

Many municipalities are starting to see the need in these much needed programs. They offer a great service to victims by quickly processing forensic evidence and giving emotional support while making their time to wait for examination as short as possible.

As SANE programs get more and more popular, we'll start to see many more of these programs as time goes on and this can only help the victims of sexual violence and help put their perpetrators behind bars so they won't have a chance to hurt anyone else.