



D64 Bridging the Communication Gap: A Collaboration with the Oakland Police Department Criminalistics Laboratory, CALICO, and Children's Hospital

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After attending this presentation, attendees will be informed of the benefits of collaboration between scientists, investigators, prosecutors, and children's advocates.

The presentation will impact the forensic science community by providing all parties with the tools to more effectively assess the different needs of the stakeholders involved in crimes committed against children.

The Oakland Police Department Crime Lab has developed an ongoing collaboration with organizations working with child victims of sexual assault. The crime laboratory collaborates with the police investigators, the Oakland Children's Hospital and CALICO – Child Abuse Listening, Interviewing & Coordination Center.

CALICO is a non-profit organization specialized in non-traumatizing and unbiased interviewing methods for child victims of crimes. Members of CALICO include prosecutors, child interviewers, and family service coordinators. Child advocates are also part of the case review process. The doctors and nurses at Children's Hospital document and collect all potential evidence from a child after an alleged assault. Both organizations are often the first contacts for children and their families and are a vital resource during a very stressful time. Collaboration between these groups has been in existence for many years. The crime laboratory was invited to join this group in 2008.

The crime lab's communication with these organizations and the case investigators elucidates our purpose and abilities with regards to the use of physical evidence. This has improved the overall outcome for victims of sexual assault by debunking common myths spread by the media and fictional television. Better communication also ensures potential evidence is not being missed. Likewise, understanding the exam and interview process can help the crime lab understand how they are only one part of a large process.

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