



D2 Incorporating Forensic Nursing Education Into Undergraduate Nursing Programs: A Simulation Approach

Stacy A. Drake, MSN, MPH, 6510 Acorn Court, Pearland, TX 77584*

After attending this presentation, attendees will have a blueprint for integrating forensic knowledge in nursing education or other health care curriculums. The presentation embraces the premise that forensic nursing should be included in the Bachelor of Science in nursing curriculum because of the potential impact on the forensic community and the public health care system.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community and public health care system by serving as an example of how forensic nursing content can be included within undergraduate nursing curriculums. The examples provided include knowledge of forensic nursing as well as permitting the student to synthesize this information via simulation of forensic cases.

Because of the national nursing shortage, nursing education nationwide is pared to the essentials required by the state boards of nursing and accreditation agencies; programs are accelerated leaving no room for alternate tracks or electives. However, given that nursing students in their clinical rotations will inevitably be exposed to wound care, family dynamics, pediatric and elder patients suffering from abuse, and like situations, scenarios that deal with forensic nursing principles can be built into existing courses. This permits students and new graduates to expand their nursing competencies. With this added information, students can assist in recognizing and documenting injury patterns, identifying and preserving gunshot residue, or implementing policies to preserve biological specimens in case of suspected toxicological death.

As a growing number of nursing programs and hospital orientation programs employ simulations in training, scenarios can focus on the role of the nurse in a forensic application. In this era of cost consciousness in the hospital setting, the nurse is often the most logical person or the first line of opportunity for documenting and preserving forensic evidence. In fact, the nurse may be the only person available for this documentation. This type of role responsibility is portrayed in the simulation. Thus the student nurses learn practical implementation of forensic science in an intra-professional setting as they also learn wound care and other medical-surgical procedures. These simulations are distributed throughout the three to four semesters of nursing education, beginning with physical assessment courses and continuing through senior level courses where students learn to deal with death and dying and patient care in hospital emergency and other high acuity settings. In the last semester of training, seminars focus on forensic knowledge that permit attendees to learn about recognizing, collecting, preserving, and documenting evidence; supporting sexual abuse survivors; and working with forensic pathologists; medicolegal death investigators; and law enforcement personnel. When the simulation scenarios and simulations are pulled together in a package, they also provide continuing education units to Registered Nurses (RN). In addition, this focus on forensic nursing through simulation provides basic training for RNs needing certification that will enable them to actively participate in a forensic nursing team. The presentation will include our initial experiences with this curriculum and some early outcome data.

Forensic Science, Forensic Nursing, Undergraduate Nursing Curriculum