The Medical Evaluation of Sexual Abuse Victims

Who? What? When? Why?

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Objectives

- Understand the purpose of a medical examination for the sexual abuse victim
- Review the appropriate timing of the medical examination
- Understand how the medical exam is done
- Understand the limitations of the medical exam
<table>
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<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>On-site</th>
<th>Off-hr</th>
<th>Referral by</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anderson</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>CPS, LE</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Knoxville</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>CPS/MDT</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Madison</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>CPS, LE occ Dr</td>
<td>Disclosure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robertson</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>CPS, LE /CPIT</td>
<td>Penetration disclosure or nv, offer in all</td>
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<td>Rutherford</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>CPS, LE, CAC</td>
<td>MDT post interview</td>
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<td>Shelby</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>LeBonheur</td>
<td>CPS, LE/ CPIT</td>
<td>Suspicion/disclosed pen, NV</td>
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<td>Summer</td>
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<td>31st Judicial</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Nashville</td>
<td>Any CPIT member</td>
<td>CPIT post-interview, protocol</td>
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</table>
CPS is investigating a case of a 5 yo girl as a possible victim of sexual abuse because she has been asking people to “touch my boobies and rub them”

Does she need a medical examination?
During a forensic interview she discloses that when she visits her daddy, her Uncle Joey likes to rub her boobies and between her legs. She likes it too. On further questioning, she says his hands are always on top of her clothes and she denies all other activities. Her last visit was 2 weeks ago.

Does she need a medical examination?
“Doc, we’re waiting for your exam to decide if we should charge him.”

Why do we do a medical examination?
The purposes of a medical evaluation in suspected child abuse include:

- Help ensure the health, safety, and well-being of the child
- Diagnose, document, and address medical conditions resulting from abuse
- Differentiate medical findings that are indicative of abuse from those which may be explained by other medical conditions
- Diagnose, document, and address medical conditions unrelated to abuse
- Assess the child for any developmental, emotional, or behavioral problems needing further evaluation and treatment and make referrals as necessary
- Reassure and educate the child and family.

(NAC Standards for Accreditation)
“SPECIALIZED MEDICAL EVALUATION AND TREATMENT SERVICES ARE ROUTINELY MADE AVAILABLE TO ALL CAC CLIENTS AND COORDINATED WITH THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM RESPONSE.”
“All children who have been sexually abused should be evaluated by a pediatrician and a mental health professional to assess the need for treatment and to assess the level of family support.”

Guidelines for the Evaluation of Sexual Abuse of Children. AAP CCAN, 2005
Navigating the Medical World
Common Dilemma

You said all children should be evaluated but we’re investigating a little boy who just discloses fondling. Do we really have to put him through an evaluation?
Common Dilemma #2

OK, you convinced me that every child who’s suspected of being an abuse victim should have an exam but how quickly should it be done? Emergency evaluations in our area have to go miles away.
When should the exam be done

The 72 hour rule

STI incubation period:
- Chlamydia - 1 or more weeks
- Gonorrhea - 2-7d
- Syphilis – 10-90 d
- Hepatitis B - 45-160d
- HIV - 12-18 months
Common Dilemma #3

They had an exam in the emergency department at St Elsewhere. Do they really need another exam at the CAC?
Common Dilemma #4

She had an exam in the emergency department but they won’t release the information because of HIPAA. Will she need another exam?
Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)

TRUMPS

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
Common Dilemma #5

Mom became hysterical when we told her her daughter needed a medical examination “down there”.

Mom’s Vision of an Exam
Technique
Labial Separation
Labial Traction
I’m really glad I can read your writing but I don’t understand what it means. Was she penetrated or not?
Why I usually can’t answer that

Anatomy, Language
Hymenology and Healing
T.C.A. § 39-13-522 “unlawful sexual penetration” means sexual intercourse, fellatio, anal intercourse, any other intrusion, however slight, of any part of a person's body or of any object into the genital or anal opening of the victim's, the defendant's or any other person's body.
Anatomy

- fallopian tube
- ovary
- sigmoid colon
- uterus
- fornix
- cervix
- rectum
- bladder
- pubic bone
- clitoris
- urethra
- vagina
- anus
Healing

3 days after assault 19 days after assault
3 days after assault

24 days after assault
6 yo disclosed digital penetration

12 days later
Hymenology and The Scrunchie
Genital Anatomy in Pregnant Adolescents: “Normal” Does Not Mean “Nothing Happened”

Nancy D. Kellogg, MD*; Shirley W. Menard, RN, PhD, CPNP, FAAN‡; and Annette Santos, RN, SANE§
Normal examination in a 13 yo pregnant with her 2\textsuperscript{nd} child
Abnormal findings in only 14% of 236 examinations

Language

Verbal vs demonstrating
Development
Substitute words
Conclusions

- All suspected victims should have medical examinations for their health and well-being
- The decision to charge a perpetrator should not be dependent on the physical examination