

PRESS RELEASE

FROM THE FACULTY OF FORENSIC & LEGAL MEDICINE
of the Royal College of Physicians of London



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LACK OF TRAINED FORENSIC PHYSICIANS “OF CONCERN”, SAYS FFLM

The lack of suitably trained forensic physicians to examine the victims of sexual assault is of concern, says the **Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine (FFLM)** today (for immediate release, Tuesday 29 June 2010).

The patchy quality of examinations of victims of sexual assault – and also those arrested for serious sexual offences – is particularly worrying because failings can contribute to unsuccessful prosecutions, says the FFLM, which campaigns to promote good practice in forensic and legal medicine.

Research has shown that without appropriate forensic medical training, patient safety may be compromised and forensic evidence is more likely to be missed.

“Despite the current financial crisis, if we are to prevent miscarriages of justice we must ensure quality standards, and a forensic service that is adequately funded,” says FFLM President Professor Ian F. Wall. The Faculty also wants the NHS, rather than the police, to commission forensic medical services.

The Faculty was established in 2006 by the Royal College of Physicians of London in order to promote education and knowledge in the field of forensic and legal medicine, and to develop and maintain good practice by ensuring the highest professional standards of competence and ethical integrity.

The Faculty now has more than 750 members, who include forensic medical practitioners (forensic physicians, forensic pathologists, sexual assault examiners, and child physical and sexual assault examiners); medically qualified coroners; and medico-legal advisers to the medical defence organisations.

This year the FFLM introduced a rigorous examination for forensic practitioners, covering general forensic medicine and sexual assault examination. It is currently consulting on minimum standards for doctors undertaking this type of work. The Faculty supports revalidation and peer review of doctors in this area of practice.

Victims of sexual assault should be examined in a SARC (Sexual Assault Referral Centre) or equivalent, preferably provided by the NHS, adds the FFLM.

Ends

For further information contact Mike Hutchinson on 020 7624 6257 or 07760 155216.
The FFLM is Registered Charity No 1119599. Visit www.fflm.ac.uk for more about the Faculty.