



Risk assessment in sexual assault

Forensic medical examinations of complainants of rape and sexual assault require a great deal of skill from the clinicians involved if they are to be done to a high standard. Frequently these examinations will involve some of the most vulnerable members of society, often taking place at a time of charged emotion. The clinician must be able to assess and identify potential issues and risks both prior to and during the holistic forensic and medical assessment in order to be able to formulate a management plan that enables the person to receive the optimal service and care. Additionally the scope of the risk assessments should extend beyond those focussing on the complainant to include a wider consideration of their dependents, the public and indeed the clinician too.

The aim of this presentation is to consider in broad terms the different risk assessments that the Forensic clinician should consider and then to focus in more detail on some of the most frequent issues including:

1. Be able to formulate a matrix to assist with identifying potential risks in sexual violence cases.
 2. Have an awareness of various screening tools and risk assessments.
 3. Have an understanding of how to manage risks identified.
 4. Have an awareness of resources available to assist with the above.
 5. Have an understanding of the need for good communication skills and the importance of comprehensive note keeping.
- Sexual health
 - Mental health
 - Learning disability
 - Domestic violence
 - Child sexual exploitation



Dr Catherine White OBE

I joined the St Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre, Manchester, UK in 1995 as one of the forensic physicians before taking the role as Clinical Director in 2003. Founded in 1986, St. Mary's has had over 22,000 clients and sees on average 1500+ cases per year with over 500 of these being children.

In 2012 I was appointed as a UN Expert on Sexual Violence. Since then I have been working on a project developing forensic medical services in the West Bank, State of Palestine and since 2015 I have been involved in a similar UN project in Egypt.

I was honoured on the Queen's New Year's Honours List 2014 with an OBE for services to Vulnerable People.

Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine:

- Vice President May 2010 – 2013
- I currently sit on the Academic Committee and Forensic Science Committee.

I have several publications on the subject of sexual violence.