

Emergency department nursing care for sexually assaulted patients

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INTRODUCTION

- Sexual assault (SA) refers to any sexual contact or behaviour that is performed or attempted without the recipient's consent (4).
- It is estimated that **1 in 3** women worldwide have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime (7).



- Immediate medical and psychological care directly impacts the patient's wellbeing and contributes to the beginning stages of the healing process (1,3).
- Emergency nurses need to be prepared to address physical and psychological problems related to SA (3,10).



OBJECTIVE

Determine the nurse's role in taking care of sexually assaulted patients in the emergency department setting.

METHODOLOGY




PubMed



CINHAL

Pscycinfo

Key terms 

"Sexual assault" "nursing" and "emergency department"

Eligibility criteria

Search results



English & Spanish



Adult women



Emergency department (ED)

116
excluded

121
Total
articles

5

included in
the study

RESULTS

Care upon arrival



- Priority of addressing vital signs: airway, breathing circulation, and hemodynamic stability (4).
- Treating serious physical injuries over evidence collection or other intervention (4, 8).



Psychosocial care

- Maintaining a calm, caring environment, ensuring victims feel safe and supported. Avoid using critical, harsh, or blaming language. (2, 4, 8)
- Empathy, offering reassurance, support and maintaining dignity, emphasizing that the assault was not their fault. (4, 8)

Physical interventions

- Pregnancy prevention, STI assessments, forensic evidence collection, and post-exposure prophylaxis administration (4, 6, 11).

Discharge planning

- Providing information on tests, treatments, and community resources, ensuring patient safety and support beyond the ED (4, 8).



CONCLUSION

- Caring for sexually assaulted patients is a complex task that involves multiple domains.
- Importance of knowledge acquisition in the matter, with mandatory courses at university, including simulated clinical practice of these scenarios.
- Continuous training for ED nurses, updating with the latest protocols and information available.
- Necessity of further research due to the lack of updated protocols and investigations including the victim's experience.

REFERENCES

