

JOINT EVENT

5<sup>th</sup> Annual Congress on **EMERGENCY NURSING & CRITICAL CARE**  
&  
**26<sup>TH</sup> CANCER NURSING & NURSE PRACTITIONERS CONFERENCE**  
July 16-17, 2018 | London, UK

**Sexual assault in the emergency department: Are we missing something?****Heidi Martin**

University Medical Center of New Orleans, USA

Lack of education leads to missed opportunity. Education is a necessary component for all members of a multidisciplinary team who provide victim-centered care in an Emergency Department (ED). Awareness of signs and symptoms of psychological trauma is key in preventing sexual assault victims from slipping through the cracks. Often, external injuries are focused on and in cases of sexual assault the crime may be missed in its entirety; this oversight has the potential to not only create a risk for sexually transmitted diseases, but may also return the patient to a dangerous environment in the event of trafficking cases. Healthcare providers have an obligation to appropriately identify and respond to victims of sexual assault, without the appropriate education, public health and public safety concerns are created. The evolution of societal awareness and concern, moving to action and intervention begins with bedside nursing in the clinical setting. This initial step is a nursing intervention that when judiciously applied, identifies these unique cases. Psychiatric knowledge combined with a victim-centered response, creates successful interventions in addressing neuro-trauma. For patients that are post sexual assault, a visit to the ED may see them present anywhere on a spectrum from an acute psychotic episode to mild anxiety or even complete denial. The nature of sexual assault tends to create complex psychological trauma that is expressed differently from patient to patient. My experience as a psychiatric and ED nurse at a Level 1 trauma center has equipped me to better identify victims of sexual assault and therapeutically engage patients with neuro trauma during forensic medical examinations. All ED nurses should be provided the basic tools and training to identify victims.

**Biography**

Heidi Martin is a Forensic Nurse with a strong foundation in ED psychiatric nursing. She has built her career by working as an ED Nurse in a Level 1 trauma center and expanded to forensics to address the needs of this population. She also likes kitties and coffee.

heidi.martin@lcmchealth.org

Notes: