

Medical Response to

# Adult Sexual Assault

A Resource for Clinicians and  
Related Professionals

*SECOND EDITION*



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Medical Response to

# Adult Sexual Assault

A Resource for Clinicians and  
Related Professionals

*SECOND EDITION*

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## FOREWORD TO THE SECOND EDITION

For those who work in the field of identifying and responding to sexual assaults, we are seeing historic trends in voices of survivors being sought out, heard, and respected. We have seen the beginnings of a transformation in the health care environment, with increased efforts to actively seek out information about how the effects of trauma and adversity intertwine across the lifespan and to respond with trauma-informed practices.

*Medical Response to Adult Sexual Assault, Second Edition* is an outstanding resource for both seasoned providers and for those hoping to start or to improve their ability to respond to survivors of sexual violence. The authors and contributors to this book are national leaders in the field of identifying and responding to sexual violence. This book spans the fundamentals of the anatomy of sexual assaults to the operationalization of sexual assault response teams to the macrosocial constructs that support a society where sexual assaults occur all too often. It explores the diversity of settings and manifestations of sexual assault, bringing attention to less traditionally explored contexts like violence occurring within the military and among those exploited through human trafficking and substance use disorders. The book provides a detailed description of the specifics of violence as it occurs among intimate partners and within families.

I particularly appreciated the inclusion of innovative content related to exploring our emerging understanding of the effects of toxic stress observed among survivors of sexual assaults. Along with explanations of the neurobiology of toxic stress, the book explores the downstream challenges of immediate and long-term recovery. With an improved downstream response, we ultimately must look upstream in order to find ways to better prevent and mitigate the effects of toxic stress. Upstream responses stem from improved awareness and reductions in the stigma of disclosure and engagement with service.

While much of the content is directed to providers who work in the immediate aftermath of a sexual assault (ie, sexual assault nurse examiners), I would recommend this book to any health care professional who has witnessed and understands the impact of sexual violence within the communities in which they serve and live, but also to any who are new to practice and want to best serve the needs of their patients. *Medical Response to Adult Sexual Assault, Second Edition* will help advance our understanding of the current state of best practices in identifying and responding to survivors of sexual violence, as well as inform next steps in primary prevention.

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## FOREWORD TO THE FIRST EDITION

*Medical Response to Adult Sexual Assault* is a testament to the maturity of our understanding of the unfortunate reality of adult sexual assault. In many ways, it is the reference bible for adult sexual assault, reflecting the collective science and wisdom of an increasingly professional response to the needs of sexual assault victims. This tome does a superb job of reflecting the history of society's response to sexual assault. Whether the reader is looking to fully understand legislative responses, addressing the medical needs of victims, the significance of and how to collect forensic evidence, the mental health impact of sexual assault, or the critical importance of treatment, each and every aspect of these topics is fully covered.

The most important first steps following disclosure of sexual assault are critically important to substantiation, protection, and, ultimately, securing the treatment services that victims need and deserve. Whether the reader is a new graduate of a SANE/SART program or a seasoned clinician, a law enforcement investigator or prosecutor, a mental health clinician, or a community agency professional, this reference text provides the most up-to-date information to understand and respond to the needs of victims.

It is not enough to simply be able to know one's own discipline and be competent in that discipline. Successful outcomes depend on interdisciplinary collaboration. This reference is organized in a manner that provides not only an understanding of what each discipline must do to address the needs of victims, but how to work with other disciplines in a manner that ultimately provides a collective insight and best serves the needs of victims.

The unique needs of special populations, such as college students, drug-facilitated assault victims, elder sexual assault victims, or victims whose assault occurs while on duty, are addressed.

For the health care professional, it is not enough to just identify physical evidence of assault, collect evidence, and treat the patient. Clinicians must understand the legal implications of everything they do and the importance of how they document their observations and the histories they obtain that speak to the truth of an assault victim's experience. They must maintain a balanced, objective demeanor and formulate defensible diagnostic assessments. The knowledge to accomplish the tasks just outlined is in this text from the most basic to the most nuanced information.

These 20 chapters, written by recognized authorities, are well constructed, simple to read, and richly illustrated, making this text the reference of choice for emergency rooms and professionals who serve the needs of sexual assault victims.

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## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Sexual violence, among other things, is a public health issue, a social problem, produces a psychological outcome, and has a culture to its history. The impact of sexual violence extends far beyond the assault itself.

With the second edition of *Medical Response to Adult Sexual Assault*, our goal is to give doctors, nurses, law enforcement, lawyers, and the other members of the sexual assault response team a comprehensive reference that will allow them to successfully document and collect evidence, anticipate the needs of their patients, and provide compassionate care that will hopefully begin the healing process for sexual assault survivors.

Sexual violence, including rape and sexual assaultive acts, impacts health in many ways, often leading to both short- and long-term physical, emotional, social, and sexual consequences. While the term *rape* has a constricted definition of forced sexual penetration, including both psychological coercion as well as physical force, it includes attempted rapes, male as well as female victims, and both heterosexual and same-sex rape.

*Sexual assault*, on the other hand, implies a wide range of victimization to include attacks or attempted attacks involving unwanted sexual contact between victim and offender. Sexual assaults include verbal threats and may or may not involve force and include such acts as grabbing or fondling.

Susan Brownmiller wrote in her groundbreaking 1975 book, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*: “My purpose in this book was to give rape a history. Now we must deny its future.”

Until rape is denied, we must continue the work. Our purpose in this book is to provide nursing, medical, and mental health professionals working with survivors of sexual assault and violence up-to-date research and evidence-based practices to help these professionals provide patients with compassionate care. It has been over 40 years since the first sexual assault nurse examiner program was started, and our understanding of how to provide the best possible care for our patients has only continued to evolve since then.

While we have certainly come a long way in our treatment of and attitudes toward sexual assault survivors, there is still a long way to go. It is our intent that this text will be a step in the right direction in providing survivors the care and support they deserve.

**Linda E. Ledray, RN, SANE-A, PhD, FAAN**  
**Ann Wolbert Burgess, DNSc, APRN, FAAN**

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## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

When Ann Burgess wrote her seminal article, “Rape Trauma Syndrome,” in 1974 and Linda Ledray started the first sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) program in Minneapolis in 1977, neither dreamed that over 30 years later there would be SANE and sexual assault forensic examiner (SAFE) programs across the United States, Canada, and many other countries. While the initial drive to improve services clearly came from the advocate movement, the medical community—led by nurses—was quick to respond. We hope the time has come when it is no longer acceptable to just read the directions in the sexual assault evidence collection kit while providing care to the victim. We would certainly think this behavior unacceptable within any other patient population.

Another milestone for the forensic nursing movement came in 1992 when 72 nurses from 26 programs throughout the United States came together in Minneapolis, excited about the new role that was developing. Since two members of our group were from Canada, we decided to call this new organization the International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN). Once we combined the enthusiasm and expertise of the many nurses across the country, the model began to flourish. This new role officially became known as the SANE role 5 years later in 1997 at an IAFN meeting in Kansas City. Around the same time, the Office for Victims of Crime took the opportunity to further support program development through grants, many of which have gone to the IAFN and to member programs. To a great extent, it was the support for the SANE model from the staff and members of IAFN that took it from only a few programs to every state in the United States as well as to many countries throughout the world. The US military also strives to have this high quality of care available for all soldiers who may be victimized, regardless of where they are stationed.

*Medical Response to Adult Sexual Assault* is intended to summarize these 30 years of experience and research and provide the reader with up-to-date information based upon this research. It is intended to provide the reader with an easily accessible guide to providing all men, women, and adolescents who have been sexually assaulted with the best care possible, anticipating and meeting all of their needs. It is also intended to walk the reader through the court process and address their role, should the case go to trial. Knowing what can be expected in a court of law is the best preparation for our work and documentation of that work in the medical setting. The better job we do with the initial exam and documentation, the more likely an offender will be identified, and the more likely the case will settle out of court (and the less likely we will be called to testify). When we provide good patient care and evidence collection, there is less secondary trauma for our patients, and more offenders are identified and apprehended, resulting in fewer future sexual assaults. This is clearly an opportunity to impact not only the way our patients are treated, but—by assisting the criminal justice system to identify the offenders—also assist them with preventing future victimization.

Those of us who were a part of that initial meeting in Minneapolis are especially grateful to the continued efforts of IAFN staff and members to further the SANE model. That is why we have chosen to dedicate this book to IAFN and its members. Our hope is that it will help further our mutual goal of improving the medical, legal, forensic, and supportive response to victims of sexual assault.

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## REVIEWS TO THE SECOND EDITION

*This well-developed, comprehensive text will be a valuable resource for forensic nurse educators and their students. In addition, it will serve as an excellent reference tool for both novice and experienced sexual assault examiners. The format and content are well suited for use in a basic SANE/SAFE course, or as part of a larger and more diverse advanced forensic nursing education curriculum. Each chapter is written and arranged in a manner to provide the reader with a clear and complete understanding of the subject matter. Topics ranging from the history and development of SANE practice, through a detailed step-by-step explanation of clinical evaluation process (complete with detailed photographs), to recognizing and meeting the needs of a wide range of unique victim populations are all thoroughly covered. Nurses and non-nursing professionals working in the field of sexual assault response will also greatly benefit from the content provided on related topics including SART development, human trafficking, and nonfatal strangulation. There have been many advances in the science and practice of forensic nursing over the past 3 decades and this work reflects the latest information available to instructors, students, and actively practicing forensic examiners alike. I highly recommend this book to any health care professional providing services for victims of sexual violence.*

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*The Medical Response to Adult Sexual Assault, 2nd Edition is a “must have” reference book for all health care professionals that provide care for and have contact with sexual assault patients in all arenas of health care. The text provides a roadmap from the collaborative nature of sexual assault care through victim recovery. This roadmap includes laying a foundation for the care of the sexual assault patient based on the most current science and research. With the inclusion of chapters outlining the care of specific patient populations with unique health care, safety, and forensic needs, readers will find the most current approaches to medical forensic care. This text will be one of the most frequently used in any practitioner’s reference library.*

Kim Day, RN, SANE-A, SANE-P  
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*This authoritative text is an invaluable resource to all health care professionals (eg, physicians, advance practice providers, forensic nurses) who provide care to adults when there is a concern for sexual as well as physical assault. The authors, Linda Ledray and Ann Wolbert Burgess, provide a comprehensive review of the history of forensic nurse examiners as well as the approach to the medical history, physical and anogenital examination, documentation, and health care needs. The chapter by Diana Faugno and Stacey Mitchell will aid the team in expanding service provision beyond the acute sexual assault examination to assist our agency partners with medical evaluations, evidence collection, and documentation of injury in suspects. This text is essential for both the education of the novice examiner as well as for the experienced examiner who needs to maintain competency and currency in the field.*

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*This is a very well written book that will serve as an excellent resource for students and clinicians. The authors ground their statements in carefully selected findings from a range of peer-reviewed research that includes a nice balance of both seminal and novel work. For example, in discussing victim impact, the authors describe findings from Burgess and Holmstrom’s pivotal 1974 study, which led to the development of the diagnosis of rape trauma syndrome. The chapter on the neurobiology of the trauma-stress response is especially well done and is a tremendous contribution to students and providers for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the fact that when clinicians are facile with these concepts they are in a better position to help their patients understand and normalize their complicated responses to trauma, many of which are quite puzzling to victims.*

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## REVIEWS TO THE FIRST EDITION

*In Medical Response to Adult Sexual Assault, Dr. Ledray leads the way for medical and allied health professionals to improve the medical care given to this population. According to the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network, in 2007 there were 243,300 victims of adult sexual assault in the United States. This population has specific unmet needs, some of which can be met with the emergence into practice of the content knowledge from Dr. Ledray's book. This text is comprehensive in scope, covering the history of specialization care, categorizations of victims of adult sexual assault with common threads for identification and treatment, and includes a chapter on evidence collection, preservation, and identification that will strongly support the legal machinations that must occur. This text should become a necessary and well-worn resource to medical professionals working with adult sexual assault victims.*

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*The authors of Medical Response to Adult Sexual Assault provide an invaluable resource for the professionals who collaborate to provide services to victims of sexual assault. The range of chapters and the comprehensiveness with which each chapter is written demonstrates a complete and detailed understanding of the issues associated with sexual assault cases. The reader will find that reference and the use of this resource to be most rewarding. This superbly edited text by three of the most well-respected clinicians in the area of sexual assault will undoubtedly become a standard in educational settings across a diverse professional spectrum.*

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*This text is a must read for all health care professionals who work in hospital emergency departments and other professionals who come in contact with sexual assault victims. Topics covered include the history and importance of SARTs; physiological and psychological consequences of sexual assault; conducting the examination; collecting evidence; and qualifications of SART members. Registered nurses interested in becoming SANEs will find this text particularly informative. This text clearly articulates the highest standards of care and is both a valuable reference book and an excellent instructional source for educating professionals in the care of sexual assault victims.*

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*Medical Response to Adult Sexual Assault offers a comprehensive, holistic, and collaborative approach to adult sexual assault, and is an invaluable resource to any professional who may provide care to this population. This book provides the content and framework to expand and improve the quality of an interdisciplinary assessment and treatment of adult sexual assault. This resource also provides a broader scope of the specific dynamics of the adult sexual assault response in settings such as the military and college campuses, and informs the reader with greater understanding of the male sexual assault victim, elder sexual abuse, and human trafficking. Having all the relevant content in one textbook like this is an effective and informative tool for professionals in health care as well as other important disciplines serving these victims.*

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*Medical Response to Adult Sexual Assault is an outstanding text that mimics an encyclopedia as it covers a wide range of pertinent issues that include historical, medical, SANE, and legal perspectives. The book provides hard-to-find information about topics such as conducting a sexual assault examination, providing courtroom testimony, and identifying the complexities associated with crimes against vulnerable individuals, such as the elderly and incarcerated. The seasoned contributors bring the content alive with their experience, anecdotes, and superb writing. This text is most worthy of some precious space on your bookshelf.*

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# CONTENTS IN BRIEF

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<b>CHAPTER 1: SEXUAL ASSAULT NURSE EXAMINER AND SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE TEAM OVERVIEW AND HISTORY . . . . .</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2: BASIC ANOGENITAL AND ORAL ANATOMY . . . . .</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>CHAPTER 3: BODY INJURY AND DYNAMICS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT . . . . .</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4: THE SEXUAL ASSAULT EXAMINATION COMPONENTS AND DOCUMENTATION . . . . .</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>CHAPTER 5: BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE: IDENTIFICATION, COLLECTION, PRESERVATION, AND USE IN COURTROOM TESTIMONY. . . . .</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>CHAPTER 6: POSTASSAULT PROPHYLAXIS . . . . .</b>	<b>161</b>
<b>CHAPTER 7: MALE SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS . . . . .</b>	<b>181</b>
<b>CHAPTER 8: SUSPECT FORENSIC EXAMINATIONS . . . . .</b>	<b>193</b>
<b>CHAPTER 9: VICTIM IMPACT AND RECOVERY . . . . .</b>	<b>209</b>
<b>CHAPTER 10: THE NEUROBIOLOGY OF TRAUMATIC STRESS RESPONSES AFTER SEXUAL ASSAULT. . . . .</b>	<b>237</b>
<b>CHAPTER 11: EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS OF THE FORENSIC NURSE IN SEXUAL ASSAULT EVALUATION . . . . .</b>	<b>259</b>
<b>CHAPTER 12: SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE TEAM OPERATION . . . . .</b>	<b>281</b>
<b>CHAPTER 13: SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE IN THE MILITARY . . . . .</b>	<b>295</b>
<b>CHAPTER 14: CAMPUS SEXUAL ASSAULT . . . . .</b>	<b>309</b>
<b>CHAPTER 15: DRUG-FACILITATED SEXUAL ASSAULT . . . . .</b>	<b>333</b>
<b>CHAPTER 16: INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND RAPE. . . . .</b>	<b>361</b>
<b>CHAPTER 17: HUMAN TRAFFICKING . . . . .</b>	<b>381</b>
<b>CHAPTER 18: ELDER SEXUAL ABUSE . . . . .</b>	<b>425</b>
<b>CHAPTER 19: SEXUAL HOMICIDE . . . . .</b>	<b>459</b>
<b>CHAPTER 20: EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT NURSE EXAMINER PROGRAMS . . . . .</b>	<b>479</b>
<b>CHAPTER 21: NONFATAL STRANGULATION . . . . .</b>	<b>495</b>
<b>INDEX . . . . .</b>	<b>519</b>

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# CONTENTS IN DETAIL

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<b>CHAPTER 1: SEXUAL ASSAULT NURSE EXAMINER AND SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE TEAM OVERVIEW AND HISTORY . . . . .</b>	<b>1</b>
A New Standard of Care. . . . .	1
The Antirape Movement: The Beginning . . . . .	2
Rape Law Reform . . . . .	3
Congressional Support . . . . .	3
History of and Need for SANE-SART Programs . . . . .	4
Pioneer Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Programs . . . . .	5
The Role of the SANE and SAFE . . . . .	6
Typical SANE-SART Program Operation . . . . .	7
The SANE Evidentiary Examination . . . . .	7
Evaluating SANE Programs . . . . .	8
The Psychological Impact of Sexual Assault . . . . .	8
History of Rape Trauma Syndrome . . . . .	9
History of Psychological Trauma . . . . .	10
History of PTSD Diagnosis . . . . .	11
DSM-5 PTSD Diagnostic Criteria . . . . .	11
Comparison of DSM-5 PTSD Symptoms to DSM-IV PTSD Symptoms . . . . .	13
Terminology . . . . .	13
Rape or Sexual Assault? . . . . .	13
He or She? . . . . .	14
Victim, Survivor, or Patient?. . . . .	14
SANE or SAFE? . . . . .	14
Sexual Assault Response Team . . . . .	15
Role of Nursing . . . . .	15
References . . . . .	15
<b>CHAPTER 2: BASIC ANOGENITAL AND ORAL ANATOMY . . . . .</b>	<b>19</b>
Introduction . . . . .	19
Female Genital Anatomy . . . . .	19
The Genitalia . . . . .	19
The Hymen . . . . .	27
Hymenal Types . . . . .	31
Post-Injury Hymen . . . . .	34
Inspection of the Hymen. . . . .	34
Posterior Fourchette . . . . .	39
Female Reproductive Parts . . . . .	39
Male Genital Anatomy . . . . .	45
External Genitals . . . . .	45
Male Reproductive Parts . . . . .	47
Ejaculation . . . . .	49



Female and Male Anal Anatomy . . . . .	50
Oral Anatomy . . . . .	54
References . . . . .	58
<b>CHAPTER 3: BODY INJURY AND DYNAMICS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT . . . . .</b>	<b>63</b>
Injury . . . . .	63
Research . . . . .	64
Dynamics of Victimization . . . . .	65
Methods of Approach . . . . .	66
Con . . . . .	66
Blitz . . . . .	66
Surprise . . . . .	66
Control of the Victim . . . . .	67
Mere Presence . . . . .	67
Threats . . . . .	67
Weapon . . . . .	67
Force . . . . .	67
Substance Use . . . . .	67
Motivational Intent of the Offender (Stranger) . . . . .	69
Reaction of the Victim . . . . .	69
Offender Exit Strategies . . . . .	70
Mechanisms and Types of Injury . . . . .	71
Blunt Force Trauma . . . . .	72
Abrasions . . . . .	73
Bite Marks . . . . .	75
Mouth Bruising . . . . .	75
Ecchymoses (Contusions and Bruises) . . . . .	75
Restraint Bruising . . . . .	78
Strangulation . . . . .	78
Erythema . . . . .	80
Lacerations . . . . .	80
Cut Wounds and Stabs . . . . .	80
Sites of Injury . . . . .	82
Genital Areas . . . . .	82
Head . . . . .	82
Face . . . . .	82
Mouth and Throat . . . . .	82
Neck . . . . .	84
Chest . . . . .	84
Back . . . . .	84
Extremities . . . . .	84
Examination Process . . . . .	86
Factors Related to the Victim . . . . .	86
Anatomy and Physiology of the Reproductive Organs . . . . .	86
Condition of the Genital Structures . . . . .	87
Previous Sexual Experience . . . . .	87
Factors Related to the Assailant . . . . .	88
Object of Penetration . . . . .	88
Lubrication . . . . .	88
Sexual Dysfunction . . . . .	88
Force of Penetration . . . . .	88

Factors Related to the Environment . . . . .	88
Treatment and Documentation of Physical Injury . . . . .	89
Written Documentation . . . . .	89
Describing Physical Findings . . . . .	89
Diagrams . . . . .	90
Photographs . . . . .	90
Evidence-Based Data Tool: Comprehensive Sexual Assault Assessment Tool (CSAAT) . . . . .	92
Conclusion . . . . .	95
Appendix 3-1. Examination Results . . . . .	95
References . . . . .	100

**CHAPTER 4: THE SEXUAL ASSAULT EXAMINATION**

<b>COMPONENTS AND DOCUMENTATION</b> . . . . .	103
Introduction . . . . .	103
Examination Overview . . . . .	103
Use of Evidence . . . . .	104
Time Frame . . . . .	104
Forensic Evidence . . . . .	104
DNA Evidence . . . . .	105
DNA Evidence Collection . . . . .	106
Alternate Light Source . . . . .	107
Seminal Fluid Evidence . . . . .	107
Nongenital Injuries . . . . .	107
Anogenital Trauma . . . . .	109
Detection Methods . . . . .	109
Colposcopy and Anoscopy . . . . .	109
Toluidine Blue Dye . . . . .	110
Other Detection Methods . . . . .	111
Injuries in Consensual Versus Nonconsensual Sex . . . . .	111
Skin Color Differences . . . . .	112
Injury Patterns . . . . .	112
Injury Type . . . . .	112
Injury Location . . . . .	112
Injury Frequency . . . . .	113
Injury Severity . . . . .	113
Classification Schemes . . . . .	114
The Injury Severity Scale . . . . .	114
Clinical Injury Extent Score . . . . .	115
Pennsylvania Injury Classification System . . . . .	115
Genital Injury Severity Scale . . . . .	116
The Vulvar Acute Genital Injury Scale . . . . .	117
Injury Prevalence . . . . .	117
Blood Evidence . . . . .	119
Urine Evidence . . . . .	119
Debris Collection . . . . .	119
Male Evidence Collection . . . . .	120
Chain of Evidence Issues . . . . .	120
Maintaining Evidence Integrity . . . . .	120
Documentation . . . . .	120
Nonforensic Examination Components . . . . .	122
Sexually Transmitted Infections . . . . .	122

Pregnancy . . . . . 123  
Crisis Intervention and Counseling . . . . . 124  
After the Examination . . . . . 125  
Conclusion . . . . . 125  
References . . . . . 125

**CHAPTER 5: BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE: IDENTIFICATION, COLLECTION, PRESERVATION, AND USE IN COURTROOM TESTIMONY . . . . . 133**

Introduction . . . . . 133  
Types of Biological Evidence Found in Sexual Assault . . . . . 133  
Semen . . . . . 133  
Saliva . . . . . 134  
Blood . . . . . 134  
Skin . . . . . 134  
Hair . . . . . 134  
Bodily Excretions . . . . . 134  
Products of Conception . . . . . 134  
Other Evidence . . . . . 134  
Finding Biological Evidence. . . . . 134  
Obtaining Biological Evidence From the Victim . . . . . 136  
Factors That Influence the Amount of Biological Evidence . . . . . 136  
Amount of Time Since the Assault . . . . . 136  
Actions Taken by the Victim in the Interim . . . . . 137  
Amount of Biological Material Originally Deposited. . . . . 137  
Collection of Biological Evidence During the Sexual Assault Examination . . . . . 137  
Obtaining Biological Evidence From the Suspect . . . . . 138  
Obtaining Biological Evidence From Other Items or Places . . . . . 139  
Packaging Evidence . . . . . 139  
Storage and Transportation of Evidence . . . . . 141  
Chain of Custody and Admissibility Issues . . . . . 142  
Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) . . . . . 144  
Basics . . . . . 144  
Serology and Other Protein Marker Testing . . . . . 147  
DNA Testing of Sexual Assault Evidence . . . . . 148  
Genetic Markers . . . . . 151  
Statistical Frequency of Individual DNA Profiles . . . . . 152  
DNA Role in Legal Proceedings . . . . . 152  
Presenting DNA Evidence in Court . . . . . 153  
CODIS . . . . . 155  
Explaining the Absence of DNA Evidence . . . . . 156  
Emerging DNA Technology . . . . . 157  
Preserving Jurisdiction . . . . . 159  
Conclusion . . . . . 159  
References . . . . . 159

**CHAPTER 6: POSTASSAULT PROPHYLAXIS . . . . . 161**

Introduction . . . . . 161  
Epidemiology . . . . . 161  
STI and Pregnancy Testing . . . . . 164  
STI Prophylaxis . . . . . 167  
Gonorrhea . . . . . 167

<i>Chlamydia</i> . . . . .	167
<i>Trichomonas</i> and Bacterial Vaginosis . . . . .	169
Hepatitis B . . . . .	169
Human Papillomavirus . . . . .	169
HIV Nonoccupational Postexposure Prophylaxis . . . . .	172
Emergency Contraception . . . . .	175
Provision of Care . . . . .	176
Conclusion . . . . .	177
References . . . . .	177
<b>CHAPTER 7: MALE SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS</b> . . . . .	181
Introduction . . . . .	181
Barriers to Reporting . . . . .	181
Characteristics of Male Sexual Assault Victims . . . . .	182
Assault Characteristics . . . . .	182
Sexual Assault in Correctional Facilities . . . . .	183
The Medical Forensic Examination . . . . .	183
Care and Support . . . . .	189
Conclusion . . . . .	190
References . . . . .	190
<b>CHAPTER 8: SUSPECT FORENSIC EXAMINATIONS</b> . . . . .	193
The Suspect Examination . . . . .	193
Suspect Examination Protocols . . . . .	198
Barriers to Suspect Examinations . . . . .	199
Legal Issues . . . . .	199
Conclusion . . . . .	199
Appendix 8-1. Sample Sexual Assault Suspect Examination Documentation Form . . . . .	200
Appendix 8-2. Suspect Examination Protocols and Procedures . . . . .	205
References . . . . .	206
<b>CHAPTER 9: VICTIM IMPACT AND RECOVERY</b> . . . . .	209
Review of the Scientific Research on Sexual Assault Victim Impact and Recovery . . . . .	209
Immediate Reactions . . . . .	209
Acute Stress Disorder . . . . .	211
Posttraumatic Stress Disorder . . . . .	211
Depression . . . . .	213
Anxiety . . . . .	214
Social Adjustment and Interpersonal Functioning . . . . .	215
Health Problems . . . . .	216
Substance Abuse. . . . .	217
Other Effects . . . . .	218
Risky Sexual Behaviors . . . . .	218
Eating Disordered Behavior . . . . .	219
Costs of Rape . . . . .	219
Postassault Growth and Resilience . . . . .	220
Male Victims and Gender Differences . . . . .	221
PTSD . . . . .	221
Depression . . . . .	222
Anxiety . . . . .	222
Impact on Sexuality . . . . .	222

Substance Abuse and Self-Harming Behaviors . . . . .	223
Other Effects . . . . .	223
Discussion on Male Victims . . . . .	223
Methodological Issues . . . . .	223
Summary . . . . .	224
Clinical Implications . . . . .	224
References . . . . .	226

**CHAPTER 10: THE NEUROBIOLOGY OF TRAUMATIC STRESS RESPONSES AFTER SEXUAL ASSAULT . . . . .**

Introduction . . . . .	237
Biological Model of Stress . . . . .	237
Acute Stress Reactions . . . . .	238
Threat Appraisal . . . . .	238
Freezing Response . . . . .	242
Tonic Immobility . . . . .	242
Dissociation . . . . .	243
Acute Trauma and Memory . . . . .	243
Chronic Stress Response. . . . .	245
Psychological and Physiological Alterations . . . . .	245
Chronic Stress and Recurring Victimization . . . . .	245
Neurological Alterations . . . . .	246
Genomic Alterations. . . . .	246
Clinical Implications . . . . .	246
Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners . . . . .	250
Sexual Assault Advocates. . . . .	250
Patient Behavior and Past Trauma . . . . .	250
Early Interventions to Prevent Long-Term Adverse Health Sequelae . . . . .	250
Conclusion . . . . .	251
References . . . . .	251

**CHAPTER 11: EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS OF THE FORENSIC NURSE IN SEXUAL ASSAULT EVALUATION . . . . .**

Introduction . . . . .	259
History of the Education of Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners . . . . .	259
Equity in Care . . . . .	264
Who Should Conduct SANE Education, and Why? . . . . .	264
What is Included in SANE Educational Programs? . . . . .	265
Education . . . . .	268
Continuing Education . . . . .	269
Program Evaluation, Safety, and Educational Outcomes . . . . .	270
Educational Preparation for Program Development and Administration . . . . .	271
General Topics of Interest Related to SANE Education . . . . .	273
Scholarship . . . . .	273
Guidelines for Practice . . . . .	273
The Future of SANE/SAFE Education . . . . .	273
Foundation for SANE Education . . . . .	273
Learning Styles . . . . .	274
Distance Learning . . . . .	274
Simulation Labs . . . . .	274

Quality Improvement . . . . .	. 275
Conclusion . . . . .	. 275
References . . . . .	. 276
<b>CHAPTER 12: SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE TEAM OPERATION . . . . .</b>	<b>. 281</b>
Introduction . . . . .	. 281
What Is a Sexual Assault Response Team? . . . . .	. 281
SART Operation and Roles . . . . .	. 282
Advocate . . . . .	. 283
Law Enforcement Officer . . . . .	. 283
The SANE and SAFE . . . . .	. 284
Nurse or Advocate? . . . . .	. 284
SANE and Law Enforcement Role Distinction . . . . .	. 285
Prosecutor . . . . .	. 285
Forensic Laboratory Specialist . . . . .	. 285
SART Operation Models . . . . .	. 286
The Initial SART Response . . . . .	. 286
Additional SART Collaboration . . . . .	. 287
SANE Operation Options . . . . .	. 287
Creating a Sexual Assault Response Team . . . . .	. 288
SANE/SART Program Impact . . . . .	. 289
Conclusion . . . . .	. 290
References . . . . .	. 291
<b>CHAPTER 13: SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE IN THE MILITARY . . . . .</b>	<b>. 295</b>
Introduction . . . . .	. 295
An Overview of the United States Military . . . . .	. 295
The Branches of the Department of Defense . . . . .	. 295
The United States Army . . . . .	. 295
The United States Navy . . . . .	. 296
The United States Air Force . . . . .	. 296
The Legal System . . . . .	. 296
Courts-Martial and Other Types of Military Discipline . . . . .	. 296
General Court-Martial . . . . .	. 297
Special Court-Martial . . . . .	. 297
Summary Court-Martial . . . . .	. 298
Other Military Discipline . . . . .	. 298
Definitions of Rape and Sexual Assault in the Military . . . . .	. 298
Offenses Chargeable Under Article 120 . . . . .	. 298
Definitions of Rape and Sexual Assault . . . . .	. 299
The Evolution of Sexual Assault Policy . . . . .	. 300
The New Mandate . . . . .	. 302
Responsibilities of the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator . . . . .	. 303
The Sexual Assault Victim Intervention Program . . . . .	. 303
Restricted Verses Unrestricted Reporting . . . . .	. 303
Improving the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program . . . . .	. 304
Military Sexual Assault Training . . . . .	. 304
Raising Sexual Assault Awareness . . . . .	. 305
Sexual Assault Statistics . . . . .	. 305
Conclusion . . . . .	. 305
References . . . . .	. 306

<b>CHAPTER 14: CAMPUS SEXUAL ASSAULT</b>	309
Introduction	309
A Population at Risk	310
Culture and Dynamics	311
External Regulations That Govern Institutions	312
The Campus Sexual Assault Victims' Bill of Rights	312
The Clery Act	313
Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013	314
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972	314
Internal Regulations: Judicial Affairs	315
Impact on Health Care Providers	315
Primary Prevention Strategies	315
Development of Culturally Competent Skills to	
Work Effectively With College Students	315
Recognition of College Students as a Population at High Risk for Sexual Assault	316
Understanding of the Dynamics and Culture of Campus Communities	316
Self-Assessment of Individual Bias and Assumptions	
Regarding College Student Behaviors	316
Integration of a Methodology for Sexual Violence Screening into	
All Patient Histories, Especially Those of College Students	317
Patient Education Methodology That Addresses Vulnerability and Risk Reduction	318
Patient Education Methodology That Includes Healthy Relationships	319
Awareness of Options and Rights of College Students	320
Awareness of Available Campus and Community Resources for Referral	321
Responding to Campus Victims	321
Conclusion	322
Appendix 14-1. Campus Sexual Assault Victims' Bill of Rights	323
Appendix 14-2. Campus Sexual Assault Victims' Bill of Rights	324
Appendix 14-3. "The Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy	
and Campus Crime Statistics Act"	325
References	330
<b>CHAPTER 15: DRUG-FACILITATED SEXUAL ASSAULT</b>	333
Introduction	333
Challenges of DFSA Investigations	334
Drugs	334
Reporting the Crime	334
Evidence Collection	335
Laboratory Analysis	336
Drugs Used to Commit DFSA	343
Ethanol	343
GHB and Analogs	344
Benzodiazepines	347
Cannabis	349
Opiates and Fentanyl Analogs	350
Antihistamines	351
Dissociative Anesthetics and Analogs	351
The "Z" Drugs	352
Tricyclic Antidepressants	353
Chloral Hydrate	353
Miscellaneous Drugs	353

Conclusion . . . . .	. 354
Appendix 15-1. Case Studies . . . . .	. 354
References . . . . .	. 355
<b>CHAPTER 16: INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND RAPE . . . . .</b>	<b>. 361</b>
Introduction . . . . .	. 361
Intimate Partner Violence Overview. . . . .	. 361
Partner Rape . . . . .	. 361
Prevalence . . . . .	. 362
The Role of Coercion . . . . .	. 364
Clinical Presentation and Sequelae . . . . .	. 364
Risk of Death . . . . .	. 365
Psychological Effects . . . . .	. 365
Health Status and Disease Prevention . . . . .	. 365
Associated Behavior . . . . .	. 365
Identification of Abuse . . . . .	. 366
The Clinician’s Response to Intimate Partner Violence . . . . .	. 367
Documentation . . . . .	. 367
Intervention . . . . .	. 368
Safety in Abuse Intervention. . . . .	. 368
Safety Assessment . . . . .	. 368
Immediate Safety . . . . .	. 368
Long-Term Safety. . . . .	. 369
Societal Reaction to Marital Rape . . . . .	. 369
Special Populations . . . . .	. 369
Immigrants . . . . .	. 369
Victims With Disabilities . . . . .	. 370
Same-Sex Relationships . . . . .	. 370
Future Study and Interventions for Intimate Partner Rape . . . . .	. 371
Appendix 16-1. RADAR Algorithm. . . . .	. 371
Appendix 16-2. Domestic Violence Safety Tips . . . . .	. 372
Appendix 16-3. Case Studies . . . . .	. 373
References . . . . .	. 375
<b>CHAPTER 17: HUMAN TRAFFICKING . . . . .</b>	<b>. 381</b>
Introduction . . . . .	. 381
Overview of Human Trafficking. . . . .	. 383
Human Trafficking as Contemporary Slavery . . . . .	. 383
Legal Framework . . . . .	. 385
US Law . . . . .	. 385
State Law. . . . .	. 386
Trafficker-Victim Dynamics. . . . .	. 389
Coercion and Fear . . . . .	. 389
Victim Identification . . . . .	. 392
Safety Issues Inherent in Trafficking . . . . .	. 395
Potential Safety Issues Resulting From Trafficking . . . . .	. 395
Potential Safety Issues . . . . .	. 396
Safety and Psychological Health . . . . .	. 396
Immigration Relief and Psychosocial Implications . . . . .	. 398
Mental Health Impacts of Trafficking . . . . .	. 399
Gender Differences and Trauma Reaction . . . . .	. 404



Existential Task of the Trafficking Survivors . . . . .	405
Physical Health Impacts of Trafficking . . . . .	407
Physical Injuries . . . . .	407
Sexual Health . . . . .	409
Sexual Assault Forensic Examination. . . . .	410
Health Consequences of Trafficking . . . . .	410
Trauma-Informed Practice . . . . .	414
Cultural Competency . . . . .	414
Self-Care . . . . .	415
Conclusion . . . . .	415
Appendix 17-1. Case Studies . . . . .	416
References . . . . .	417
Additional Reading and Resources . . . . .	424
<b>CHAPTER 18: ELDER SEXUAL ABUSE . . . . .</b>	<b>425</b>
Introduction . . . . .	425
Early Detection and Reporting . . . . .	425
Literature on Elder Sexual Abuse . . . . .	426
Reporting and Investigating Alleged Elder Sexual Abuse . . . . .	428
Criminal Justice System . . . . .	428
Adult Protective Services. . . . .	428
Nursing Home Victimization . . . . .	428
Intentional Versus Unintentional Injury . . . . .	429
Complicating Factors in Reporting and Investigating Elder Sexual Abuse . . . . .	432
Detecting Injury in Elders . . . . .	435
Cause . . . . .	437
Response to Injury . . . . .	437
Outcome . . . . .	437
Forensic Detection of Injury. . . . .	437
Assessment . . . . .	438
Skin and Mucous Membrane . . . . .	438
Assessment for Bruises . . . . .	438
Assessment for Abrasions. . . . .	438
Assessment for Lacerations . . . . .	438
Response to Trauma . . . . .	439
Head Injury . . . . .	440
Neck Injury . . . . .	441
Chest Wall Injury . . . . .	441
Abdominal Injury . . . . .	442
Extremities . . . . .	442
Genital Injuries . . . . .	443
Orthopedic Injuries . . . . .	443
Pain Perception . . . . .	444
Memory Loss . . . . .	444
Hospital Admission . . . . .	444
Documentation . . . . .	445
Documenting Contusions . . . . .	445
Intervention Services for Elders . . . . .	446
Transitioning Elders from Victims to Survivors . . . . .	446
Rape Trauma Symptoms . . . . .	446
Individual Counseling . . . . .	446

Group Counseling . . . . .	447
Music Therapy . . . . .	447
Living Situations of Elder Victims and the Process of Recovery . . . . .	447
Independent Living . . . . .	447
Assisted Living . . . . .	447
Nursing Home . . . . .	448
Intervention for Family Members of Sexually Abused Elders. . . . .	448
Prevention of Elder Sexual Abuse . . . . .	449
Suggested Approaches to Elder Victims in Nursing Homes . . . . .	450
Sexual Violence Advocates . . . . .	450
Nursing Home Staff . . . . .	451
Discussion . . . . .	451
Conclusion . . . . .	453
Appendix 18-1. Case Studies . . . . .	453
References . . . . .	455

**CHAPTER 19: SEXUAL HOMICIDE . . . . . 459**

Introduction . . . . .	459
Measuring Injury Severity in Homicide . . . . .	459
Forensic Autopsy . . . . .	463
Forensic Evidence . . . . .	464
Crime Classification. . . . .	464
Organized Offenders . . . . .	467
Defining Characteristics . . . . .	467
Victimology . . . . .	467
Frequently Noted Crime Scene Indicators . . . . .	467
Staging . . . . .	468
Common Forensic Findings . . . . .	469
Disorganized Offenders . . . . .	469
Defining Characteristics . . . . .	469
Victimology . . . . .	469
Frequently Noted Crime Scene Indicators . . . . .	470
Staging . . . . .	470
Common Forensic Findings . . . . .	470
Mixed Sexual Homicide. . . . .	472
Elder Female . . . . .	473
Defining Characteristics . . . . .	473
Victimology . . . . .	473
Offenders . . . . .	474
Frequently Noted Crime Scene Indicators . . . . .	474
Common Forensic Findings . . . . .	475
References . . . . .	476

**CHAPTER 20: EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF  
SEXUAL ASSAULT NURSE EXAMINER PROGRAMS . . . . . 479**

Introduction . . . . .	479
Defining the Effectiveness of SANEs . . . . .	479
Forensic Effectiveness . . . . .	480
Legal Effectiveness . . . . .	481
Psychological Effectiveness . . . . .	481
Medical/Health Care Effectiveness . . . . .	482

Community Change Effectiveness . . . . .	. 483
Evaluating the Effectiveness of SANEs . . . . .	. 484
Steps 1 and 2: Identification of Evaluation Outcomes, Goals, and Objectives . . . . .	. 484
Step 3: Development of Evaluation Design and Evaluation Questionnaire . . . . .	. 486
Step 4: Collecting the Data . . . . .	. 486
Steps 5 and 6: Data Analysis and Using Findings for Program Improvement . . . . .	. 487
Conclusion . . . . .	. 490
References . . . . .	. 490
<b>CHAPTER 21: NONFATAL STRANGULATION . . . . .</b>	<b>. 495</b>
Introduction . . . . .	. 495
Anatomy of the Neck . . . . .	. 496
Carotid Arteries . . . . .	. 497
Carotid Artery Ganglion. . . . .	. 497
Hyoid Bone . . . . .	. 497
Jugular Veins. . . . .	. 498
Larynx . . . . .	. 498
Cricoid Cartilage. . . . .	. 498
Epiglottis. . . . .	. 498
Thyrohyoid Membrane . . . . .	. 498
Thyroid Cartilage . . . . .	. 498
Vocal Cords . . . . .	. 499
Trachea . . . . .	. 499
Signs and Symptoms of Strangulation . . . . .	. 499
Adult Nonfatal Strangulation Photodocumentation Protocol . . . . .	. 500
Recommended Equipment . . . . .	. 500
Procedure . . . . .	. 500
Nonfatal Manual Strangulation Chart . . . . .	. 511
Recommendations for the Medical/Radiographic Evaluation of Acute Adult, Nonfatal Strangulation . . . . .	. 511
Discharge Instructions . . . . .	. 512
Conclusion . . . . .	. 512
Appendix 21-1. Strangulation: Key Terms . . . . .	. 512
Injury . . . . .	. 512
Evidence Collection . . . . .	. 513
Lethality as a Result of External Pressure. . . . .	. 513
Methods of Strangulation . . . . .	. 513
Mechanisms of Strangulation . . . . .	. 513
Appendix 21-2. Recommendations for the Medical/Radiographic Evaluation of Acute Adult, Nonfatal Strangulation . . . . .	. 514
References . . . . .	. 516
Index . . . . .	. 519

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# Adult Sexual Assault

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## SEXUAL ASSAULT NURSE EXAMINER AND SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE TEAM OVERVIEW AND HISTORY

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### A NEW STANDARD OF CARE

With the implementation of sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) programs across the United States, a new standard of care was implemented for sexual assault patients. Since the development of these programs in the late 1970s, it is no longer acceptable to have untrained medical personnel reading the directions of the examination while they are treating sexual assault victims and collecting evidence. Such practices would never be considered reasonable for a physician or nurse to perform in the emergency department (ED) with other patient populations, and they should not be acceptable when caring for victims of rape.<sup>1</sup>

In some medical institutions, rape victims still encountered long waits for a rape examination and inadequate, substandard care even in several of the best medical facilities.<sup>2</sup> In medical facilities with SANE programs, studies reported that care was far superior. The evidence indicates that SANE programs offer emergency contraception (EC) 97% of the time and medication to prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs) 99% of the time. Nationally, non-SANE programs only offered EC 20% of the time, and they either screened for STIs or offered STI prophylactic care 58% of the time.<sup>3</sup> Reasons programs did not routinely offer particular services (eg, STI cultures, HIV testing and prophylaxis, emergency contraception) included financial constraints, difficulties balancing medical care with legal prosecution, and affiliations with religious hospitals.<sup>4</sup>

In 1989 the California State Court of Appeals ruled that a woman who was not given the right to choose EC could sue the hospital that provided the inadequate care.<sup>5</sup> Such a lawsuit, however, takes place in a very public forum—one that a rape victim may not be willing or able to endure. Smugar and colleagues<sup>6</sup> recognized that although it can be therapeutic for some, these lawsuits would further prolong the trauma for others. To prevent rape victims from needing to sue to access the care they needed, many states passed laws requiring sexual assault victims be provided information about EC or given these medications by health care providers when requested. It is a health care provider's responsibility to know the best care practices and to have a system in place that meets the needs of this often vulnerable population.

Over the past several decades, our awareness of the magnitude and the trauma of crime victimization has increased considerably. The costs incurred by society include medical and psychological services to aid victim recovery, the apprehension and disposition of

offenders, and the invisible climate of fear that makes safety a paramount consideration in scheduling normal daily activities. In addition to the monetary costs associated with sexual victimization, the impact of such abuse on the victim has been well documented.<sup>7,8</sup>

This chapter reviews the social and political forces in place in the 1970s when the antirape movement began; our early attempts to better understand the psychological impact on the victim through the use of the terms *rape trauma syndrome*, then *posttraumatic stress disorder*, and later the *neurobiology of trauma*; and the development and implementation of victim services, specifically SANE programs and sexual assault response teams (SARTs).

## THE ANTIRAPE MOVEMENT: THE BEGINNING

The women's rights movement in the 19th century was focused on the legal recognition of women to secure their rights to vote, to own and control property, and to participate in public affairs. In the 20th century the movement focused on confronting restrictions on women's personal lives. Analysis of these restrictions began in *consciousness-raising (CR) groups*, a new organizing tool of the women's movement whereby women discussed their experiences and the problems of being female in a modern society. Often described by men as hotbeds of radical feminism, the reality was that simply attending such a discussion group was the most assertive act many of these women were capable of taking. Within the supportive environment of the CR groups, women found the courage to share private experiences never before shared, such as incest and rape.<sup>9</sup>

These anecdotal disclosures of former victims had a profound effect on their listeners. The revelations represented an unprecedented breakthrough of the silence that surrounded the topic of rape for centuries. The act of rape has been an inherent part of women's lives throughout recorded history—a theme commonly found in literature, poetry, theater, art, and war.

Police departments and rape crisis centers first began to address the crime of rape in the early 1970s when little was known about rape victims or sex offenders. The issue of rape was just beginning to be raised by feminist groups. Unfortunately the general public was not particularly concerned about the issue of rape or the plight of rape victims. Few academic publications or special services existed, funding agencies did not see the topic as important, and health policy was almost nonexistent. In 1971, the New York Rape Speak-Out was held in an effort to raise awareness about the issue. Around the same time Susan Brownmiller wrote about the history of rape to further raise awareness and urged people to deny its continuation in the future.<sup>10</sup>

Soon after, the antirape movement began to attract women from all walks of life and political persuasions. Various strategies began to emerge, 1 of which was the self-help program now widely known as the rape crisis center. One of the first such centers was founded in Berkeley in early 1972, known as Bay Area Women Against Rape (BAWAR). Within months of the opening of the Berkeley center, similar centers were established in Ann Arbor, Michigan; Washington, DC; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Hospital-based rape counseling services began in Boston and Minneapolis.<sup>11</sup> Centers were soon replicated, and services flourished. Although volunteer ranks tended to include a large number of university students and instructors, they also included homemakers and working women. The volunteer makeup usually reflected every age, race, socioeconomic class, sexual preference, and level of political consciousness. Volunteers were, however, exclusively women. The most common denominators were commitments to aiding victims and bringing about social change.<sup>9,11</sup> As Susan Brownmiller noted, the amazing aspect of the proliferation of the grassroots women's groups was that such an approach to the problem of rape had never been suggested by men—that women should organize to combat rape was a result of the women's movement.<sup>10</sup>

In retrospect, the history of the rape crisis centers in the United States has been one of enormous struggle. The struggle was to overcome indifferences, apathy, changing social trends, and the lack of stable resources, yet the struggle was willingly undertaken from the belief in the rightness of the cause—a cause that, despite the struggles, had its share of successes. Feminists identified a social need and a way of responding to it. Rape crisis centers began to adapt their services to assist other crime victims, specifically battered women and their children. Although they never reached the goal of eradicating rape through social change, they were the instigators of social change essential to the rights of women.<sup>9,11</sup>

## **RAPE LAW REFORM**

Laws both reflect and shape public opinion and attitudes. Legislation in the form of law reform can be both instrumental and symbolic. Such was the case with rape law reform, especially in conveying the concept of rape as a physically and emotionally damaging act. Changes in rape laws helped to influence attitudes within both the criminal justice and the general community, although some would argue that jurors and citizens are still too often inclined to view rape in moral rather than criminal terms.

US criminal rape laws were derived from British common law. Three elements needed to be proved in cases of rape: (1) sexual contact, (2) force/coercion or lack of consent, and (3) the identity of the assailant. In addition, most state laws today treat sexual assault as a very serious crime. It carries more severe penalties, especially when penetration (however slight) occurred, the victim was injured, a weapon was used, or the victim was younger than the age of consent.

The penalties, of course, vary by state. Two influential legal theorists were 17th-century jurist Lord Chief Justice Matthew Hale and the Edwardian-era scholar John Henry Wigmore. Hale's belief that rape was "an accusation easily made, and hard to be proved, and harder to be defended by the party accused, though ever so innocent" was reflected in both American jury instructions and standards of proof.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, Wigmore's concern about sexually precocious minors and unchaste women who fantasize about rape gave rise to the corroboration doctrine and influenced such practices as the routine polygraph examination of victims.<sup>13</sup> Though neither man's assertions were supported by empirical data, they received widespread endorsement by legal bodies. As a result, US law reflected a concept of rape as a sexual rather than a violent offense and imposed a vast array of safeguards against false accusations by the turn of the 20th century.<sup>14</sup>

The need for rape law reform was clearly noted by women's rights movement participants who encouraged former victims to speak publicly about insensitive and indifferent treatment they experienced in the criminal justice system. These disclosures fostered recognition of the need for systematic change, which women activists felt must begin with the law itself. Movement activists organized to develop a rape law reform agenda, solicit public support for reform, and present their case to state legislators. The political climate was favorable for these citizen-initiated efforts, but it was the growing presence of women and sympathetic men within the legal and lawmaking professions that reduced most of the resistance to change. As evidenced by the radical shift in the concept of unacceptable behavior, a review of rape law reform by Largen<sup>14</sup> suggested, among other things, that in most states, social concepts of sexual assault were changing more rapidly than legal concepts. Politicians also recognized the need for more research on the impact of rape on the victim and the development of programs to meet apparent needs.

## **CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT**

Financial help came from Congress. In response to a rising crime rate and growing community concern over the problem of rape, Senator Charles Mathias of Maryland

introduced a bill in September 1973 to establish the National Center for the Prevention and Control of Rape. The purpose of the bill was to provide a focal point within the National Institute of Mental Health from which a comprehensive national effort would be undertaken to conduct research, develop programs, and provide information leading to aid for victims and their families. Also, efforts could be made to address rehabilitation of offenders and the ultimate curtailment of rape crimes. The bill was passed overwhelmingly in the 93rd Congress, vetoed by President Ford, and successfully reintroduced. The National Center was established through Public Law 94-63 in July 1975. The chair of the first advisory committee of the new center was a nurse, Ann Wolbert Burgess.

By the late 1970s, the battered women movement became an extension of the antirape movement and focused on male violence against domestic partners. Violence emerged as a public health issue with Surgeon General C. Everett Koop's convening of a workshop on violence and public health in 1985. The closing of the National Center for the Prevention and Control of Rape, however, in the late 1980s left a void in funding until 1994. Again, organized efforts were needed to keep rape crisis centers operating and lobbying for government funding. Congress once again recognized violence against women as a national problem in its 1994 passage of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) as part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, which was accompanied by President Clinton's establishment of an Office on Violence Against Women in the US Department of Justice. The National Research Council established a Panel on Research on Violence Against Women in 1995 to fulfill a congressional request to develop a research agenda to increase understanding and control of violence against women. This report highlights the major literature on the scope of violence against women in the United States, the causes and consequences of that violence, the interventions needed for both female victims of violence and male perpetrators, and funding needed to meet research goals.<sup>8</sup>

In July 2017 a major effort to further improve services for victims of sexual assault occurred when Representative Ted Poe, a Texas congressman, and Representative Carol Maloney of New York introduced a bill in the House of Representatives that would require hospitals nationwide to provide rape victims with around-the-clock access to specially trained medical workers, SANEs or sexual assault forensic examiners (SAFEs). The bill is called the Megan Rondini Act of 2017 in honor of a University of Alabama student who was raped in 2015. She reported to law enforcement and went to a Tuscaloosa hospital that did not have specially trained SANEs or SAFEs for care after the rape. Unfortunately, a year later, without the necessary support, and feeling betrayed by the system, Rondini committed suicide. The intent of this law was to ensure that in the future all victims of rape get proper medical care, support, evidence collection, and follow-up services.<sup>15</sup>

## **HISTORY OF AND NEED FOR SANE-SART PROGRAMS**

The impetus to develop SANE programs in the United States began about the same time as the first rape crisis centers were opened—the early 1970s—with nurses, other medical professionals, counselors, and advocates working with rape victims who came for medical care in traditional settings such as hospital EDs. It was obvious to these individuals that the services for sexual assault victims were inadequate because they failed to meet the standard of care required for other medical patients.<sup>16,17</sup> Rape victims often had to wait 4 to 12 hours in a busy, public area, competing unsuccessfully with the critically ill for medical staff time.<sup>16,18,19</sup> To avoid destroying evidence, they were often not allowed to eat, drink, or urinate while they waited.<sup>20</sup>



Emergency department services were inconsistent and problematic. The typical rape survivor faced a time-consuming, cumbersome succession of examiners, some with only a few hours of orientation and little experience. Many doctors and nurses were not sufficiently trained to do the medicolegal examination and were unwilling or unable to provide expert witness testimony if the case went to court.<sup>21</sup> When they had the training to complete the evidentiary examination, staff often did not complete a sufficient number of examinations to maintain their level of proficiency.<sup>22-24</sup> Even when victims' medical needs were met, their emotional needs were often overlooked and they were often blamed by police and others when they made a report.<sup>25</sup>

Often, only male physicians were available to do the vaginal examinations.<sup>22</sup> Although approximately half the rape victims in 1 study were unconcerned with the gender of the examiner, the other half found this extremely problematic. Even male victims indicated they preferred to be examined by a woman, because they were most often raped by a man and experienced the same generalized fear of and anger toward men that female victims experienced.<sup>26</sup> More research is needed, however, to explore gender issues. With the proper skills and awareness, either gender should be able to provide the highest standard of care to victims of violent crimes. The issue likely has more to do with demeanor, sensitivity, and understanding than gender.

Many anecdotal and published reports depict physicians as reluctant to do a rape examination. Key factors that have led to this reluctance include a lack of experience and training in forensic evidence collection<sup>19,21,27</sup>; the time-consuming nature of the evidentiary examination in a busy ED with many other medically urgent patients waiting to be seen<sup>28,29</sup>; and the potential that if they complete the examination they may be subpoenaed and taken away from their work in the ED to testify in court and be questioned by a sometimes hostile defense attorney.<sup>19,20,29</sup> Documentation of evidence was rushed, inadequate, or incomplete because of these factors.<sup>29</sup> Staff physicians in teaching hospitals often assigned residents to do the forensic examinations when they were available; physicians have refused to do the examination.<sup>28</sup> In 1 case a rape victim was reportedly sent home without having an evidentiary examination completed because no physician could be found to do it.<sup>30</sup>

As information has become more readily available on the complex medical-forensic needs of rape victims, nurses and other professionals have realized the importance of providing the best ED care possible.<sup>22</sup> For 75% of victims in a study evaluating care received in the ED, the initial ED visit was the only known contact they had with medical or professional support staff.<sup>31</sup> Nurses became aware that although they were often only credited with "assisting the physician with the examination," in reality they were typically performing the entire medical-forensic examination except the pelvic speculum examination.<sup>28,31</sup> It was clear to these nurses that it was time to reevaluate the system and consider a new approach.

#### PIONEER SEXUAL ASSAULT NURSE EXAMINER PROGRAMS

To better meet the needs of the sexually assaulted population, SANE programs were established in Memphis, Tennessee in 1976<sup>19</sup>; Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1977<sup>32,33</sup>; and Amarillo, Texas in 1979.<sup>34</sup> Unfortunately these nurses worked in isolation, unaware of the existence of other very similar programs until the late 1980s. In 1992, 72 individuals from 31 SANE programs across the United States and Canada came together for the first time at a meeting hosted by the Sexual Assault Resource Service and the University of Minnesota School of Nursing in Minneapolis. At this meeting the International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN) was formed.<sup>26</sup>

Development of SANE programs today is progressing rapidly, especially with the high program visibility afforded by the publication of the US Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) document the *SANE Program Development and Operation Guide*.<sup>35</sup> Although only 86 SANE programs were identified and included in the October 1996 listing of SANE programs published in the *Journal of Emergency Nursing*,<sup>26</sup> there are currently nearly 600 SANE programs registered on the OVC grant-funded Web site [www.sane-sart.com](http://www.sane-sart.com).<sup>36</sup> In 2004, the Joint Military Task Force on Sexual Assault also recognized the need for improved services for members of the Armed Forces and has begun the process of implementing SART teams for every military unit.

The American Nurses Association (ANA) officially recognized forensic nursing as a new specialty in 1995.<sup>37</sup> SANEs make up the largest subspecialty of forensic nursing internationally. At the 1996 IAFN meeting in Kansas City, Missouri, Geri Marullo, executive director of ANA, predicted that the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) would eventually require every hospital to have a forensic nurse available.<sup>38</sup> However, as of 2019 this still has not occurred. Perhaps the Poe Maloney Act, if reauthorized, will change this situation. On March 21, 2018, Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney (D-NY), author of the *Debbie Smith Act*, joined with Congressman Ted Poe (R-TX) to introduce House Resolution 5341, the *Debbie Smith Crime Victims Protection Act*. If passed this legislation would reauthorize the *Debbie Smith Act* and dedicate much-needed resources to state and local law enforcement agencies to conduct forensic analysis of DNA evidence collected from crime scenes, including untested rape kits. Smugar et al<sup>6</sup> also recommend that the JCAHO enact standards or Congress pass legislation requiring health care providers to meet a higher standard of care. SANE-SART programs have raised the standard of care for victims of sexual assault, but this standard is typically not being met in facilities that do not have SANE nurses.<sup>39</sup>

## THE ROLE OF THE SANE AND SAFE

Because forensic nurse examiner programs began and functioned independently until the founding of IAFN in Minneapolis in 1992, different terminology was being used across the country to define this new role. At the October 1996 IAFN annual meeting, the SANE Council voted on the terminology it wanted to use. The overwhelming decision was to use the title SANE—sexual assault nurse examiner. A SANE is a registered nurse (RN) who has advanced education in the forensic examination of sexual assault victims. In programs where physicians are also used, the more inclusive terms *sexual assault forensic examiners* or *forensic examiners* (FEs) are typically used. Advanced education in sexual assault forensic evidence collection is vital.

The primary mission of a SANE/SAFE program is to meet the needs of all male and female victims of sexual assault or abuse by providing immediate, compassionate, culturally sensitive, and comprehensive forensic evaluation and treatment by trained, professional nurse experts within the parameters of state nurse practice acts, the SANE standards of the IAFN, and individual agency policies. With proper training, SANE programs may provide services to children, adolescent, and adult victims. Since 2007 nearly half of SANE programs have provided services for all age groups.

In addition to documentation and collection of forensic evidence, prophylactic treatment of STIs and emergency contraception are provided by the SANE. The SANE also conducts a medicolegal examination, not a routine physical examination, to identify trauma.

Although SANEs are not advocates, they do provide the rape survivor with information to assist in anticipating what may happen next, to aid in making choices about reporting and deciding whom to tell, and to ensure that the rape survivor is safe and gets the

support needed after he or she leaves the SANE facility. This usually includes a discussion between the victim and the SANE about reporting to law enforcement.

If the victim has made a choice not to report, the SANE will need to discuss and determine why he or she may be hesitant to report. Although the decision to report is always ultimately the victim's, in most cases the SANE will encourage the survivor to report the crime and make referrals to advocacy agencies that can provide the support necessary to help the victim through the criminal justice process and to aid in a successful recovery from the rape. The SANE will also provide emotional support and crisis intervention, working with advocacy support groups such as rape crisis counselors when available.

#### TYPICAL SANE-SART PROGRAM OPERATION

To be optimally effective and provide the best service possible to victims of sexual assault, the SANE/FE must function as a part of a team of individuals from community organizations, usually referred to as a sexual assault response team (SART). At a minimum, the SART should include the SANE/FE, advocate, law enforcement officer, crime laboratory specialist, and prosecutor. It is important to understand that SARTs can function in a variety of ways, both formally and informally. To be a functioning SART, it is not necessary or typical for all team members to respond to the survivor at the same time. In fact, most SARTs do not function this way. In most cases the SANE is available on-call, off premises, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The on-call SANE is paged immediately whenever a sexual assault or abuse survivor enters the community's response system. If a rape advocate is available, the staff or SANE will also page the advocate on-call. During the time it takes for the SANE to respond (usually no more than 1 hour), the ED or clinic staff will evaluate and treat any urgent or life-threatening injuries. If treatment is medically necessary, the ED staff will treat the patient, always considering and documenting the forensic consequences of the lifesaving and stabilizing medical procedures. If immediate medical treatment is not necessary, the patient will be kept comfortable until the SANE and advocate arrive. Once the SANE arrives, consent for the forensic medical examination is obtained and the SANE conducts the forensic evidentiary examination. The law enforcement officer conducts the initial interview either before or after the SANE examination is completed.

It is important to remember that a truly functional SART is much more than just having multiple disciplines involved in a case. A truly functional SART is a team of individuals who know and trust each other—a team who understand each other's roles and role limitations, and who are working together toward the same goals of providing the most effective patient care possible while collecting all evidence available, in a victim-centered manner, to both support the victim and achieve justice. Chapters 12 and 13 address options for effective SART operation in detail and describe the impact SANE-SART programs have had on both treatment of sexual assault victims and prosecution of cases.

#### THE SANE EVIDENTIARY EXAMINATION

With the development of the SANE role, a trained medical professional was available to provide complete care to the survivor of sexual assault. In facilities with SANEs on call, it was no longer necessary for the survivor to wait until someone, often with minimal or no special training, could be freed up to provide care that was often incomplete.

The publication of *A National Protocol for Sexual Assault Medical Forensic Examinations: Adults and Adolescents* was a major step toward encouraging consistent treatment for victims of sexual assault throughout the United States. This document stressed the need to work in collaboration with other SART professionals, and it also provided specific standards of care that should be met for a SANE medical forensic examination, including the following<sup>40</sup>:

1. Collection of evidence using a sexual assault evidence collection kit
2. Further assessment and documentation for drug- or alcohol-facilitated sexual assault
3. Assessment and documentation of injuries
4. Risk evaluation and prophylactic care of STIs
5. Evaluation of pregnancy risk and EC
6. Crisis intervention
7. Referrals for medical and psychological follow-ups

Today many agencies have extended the time frame for which they will conduct a complete evidentiary examination to 96 or 120 hours or longer from the time of the sexual assault, as recommended by the American College of Emergency Physicians,<sup>41</sup> the *SANE Program Development and Operation Guide*,<sup>34</sup> and the *National Protocol for Sexual Assault Medical Forensic Exams: Adolescent and Adult*.<sup>40</sup> This increase occurred as DNA recovery techniques improved. However, research is still needed to better evaluate the value of this decision.

Chapter 4 discusses the SANE/FE examination in detail, along with updated recommendations in the 2016 *SANE Program Development and Operation Guide*, now available online.

#### EVALUATING SANE PROGRAMS

Most sexual assaults are never reported to law enforcement, and even among reported cases, most will never be successfully prosecuted. This reality has been a long-standing source of frustration for survivors and victim advocates, as well as other members of the criminal justice system. As described in this chapter, communities have implemented interventions to improve postassault care for victims and increase reporting and prosecution rates. Campbell, Patterson, and Bybee<sup>42</sup> undertook a study to examine whether adult sexual assault cases were more likely to be investigated and prosecuted after the implementation of a SANE program within a large Midwestern county. A quasi-experimental design was used to compare pre-SANE criminal justice system case progression with post-SANE program development. Results from longitudinal multilevel ordinal regression modeling revealed that case progression through the criminal justice system significantly increased after SANE implementation. More cases reached the “final” stages of prosecution (ie, conviction at trial or guilty plea bargains) after SANE program development. These findings were robust after accounting for changes in operation at the focal county prosecutors’ offices. In summary, SANE programs’ work with law enforcement and their patients, though separate and philosophically distinct, is mutually reinforcing and provides instrumental resources for successful case prosecution.<sup>42</sup>

### THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

The fact that rape occurs and is an act of conquest is documented in the Bible as well as in war annals. It is endemic to humankind and was undoubtedly practiced by cavemen. But in 1972, when Burgess and Holmstrom launched their research, there were very few clinically based articles that dealt with the incidence of rape or the impact of rape on the victim or family. We were unaware of the neurobiology of trauma, discussed in detail in Chapter 10 of this book, and its impact on victim behavior and memory recall. There was also little information on the offender. Although the violent acts and the suffering they caused had been noted since the origins of humanity, few considered these events from a health standpoint.

In the early 1970s there were 2 common stereotypes of the rapist that, in turn, greatly influenced how the rape victim was viewed. Because most assailants are male and most victims female, that was the focus of discussion. At one extreme, he was regarded as a per-

factly healthy, “red-blooded,” sexually aggressive, macho man whose offense was simply an extreme product of his cultural conditioning elicited by a provocative and seductive but punitive woman. At the other extreme, he was thought of as a bizarre, demented, oversexed “fiend” filled with lust and perverted desire who stalked his prey at night. In the former situation, the offender was seen as a totally normal individual who was essentially a victim of circumstance; in the latter, he was an inhuman creature whose predatory assaults were his only source of gratification. Both stereotypes reflected the erroneous but popular belief that rape was motivated primarily by sexual desire—the normal desires of a healthy man or the warped impulses of a sex fiend. This mistaken notion was an insidious assumption, for it followed from such a premise that if the offender was sexually aroused, then it must have been the victim who aroused him because it was toward her that these impulses were directed. From that point on, responsibility and accountability for the offense, to a large extent, shifted from the offender to the victim, and she became the accused by police, family, friends, and even herself. In court, it became the central aim of the defense attorney to impeach the victim’s credibility by showing that by her dress, conduct, conversation, or behavior she invited the assault and, either deliberately or unintentionally, that she aroused the sexual urges of her assailant. He was seen as the victim of her provocative behavior. Some high-profile cases have continued to foster this notion.

A word needs to be said about males who are raped. Male on male sexual assault is a form of sexual violence that, despite worldwide prevalence, remains significantly underreported and unrecognized. Society is becoming increasingly aware of male rape. However, experts believe that current male sexual assault statistics vastly underrepresent the actual number of males age 12 and over who are assaulted each year. This type of sexual assault is cloaked in stigma and shame. Male sexual assault is similar to male-female sexual assault in that it is predominantly an assertion of power and aggression rather than an attempt on the part of the perpetrator to satisfy sexual desire. The effect of the attack is to damage the victim’s psyche, rob him of his pride, and intimidate him.

Rape, until the 1970s, thrived on prudery, misunderstanding, and silence. It was not until the 1980s that academic and scientific publications on the subject multiplied. A review of articles on the psychological effects of rape and interventions for rape victims in the posttraumatic period located 78 references between 1965 and 1976, with 36 on the effects of rape and 42 on intervention. One of the first attempts to understand the impact of rape on the victim occurred when Burgess and Holmstrom identified the cluster of symptoms they called rape trauma syndrome.<sup>43</sup>

#### HISTORY OF RAPE TRAUMA SYNDROME

Rape trauma syndrome was 1 of 3 typologies identified by Burgess and Holmstrom in 1974 and published in the *American Journal of Psychiatry*.<sup>43</sup> The typologies were the result of personal interviews of 146 people who ranged in age from 3 to 73 years at the time of admission to the Boston City Hospital emergency department. The individuals were all admitted with the complaint, “I’ve been raped.” Three types of sexual trauma were conceptualized from the sample of 146 and based on consent (or not) to have sex: rape trauma (no consent), pressured sex (coerced sex), and sex stress (initial consent but then denial of consent). Of the 146 individuals, 92 women age 18 to 73 years were classified as rape trauma victims, and their responses to the assaultive experience formed the basis for the rape trauma syndrome. These women were interviewed at the emergency ward of the hospital and followed up 4 to 6 years later in regard to the problems they experienced as a result of being forced into nonconsensual sex.<sup>44</sup>

One of the conclusions reached by Burgess and Holmstrom as a result of studying 92 adult rape victims was that victims suffer a significant degree of physical and emotional

trauma during a rape. This trauma can be noted immediately after the assault and over a considerable period afterward. Victims consistently described certain symptoms, such as intrusive thoughts of the rape, fear, anxiety, nightmares, and daymares, as well as the development of phobias. A cluster of symptoms that most victims experienced was described as the rape trauma syndrome. This syndrome has 2 phases: the immediate or acute phase, in which the victim's lifestyle is completely disrupted by the rape crisis, and the long-term process, in which the victim must reorganize this disrupted lifestyle. The syndrome includes physical, emotional, and behavioral stress reactions that result from the person being faced with a dire threat to life or integrity.

Victims expressed other feelings in conjunction with fear, ranging from humiliation, degradation, guilt, shame, and embarrassment to self-blame, anger, and revenge. Victims reported feeling distress over reminders (or cues) of the assault. Victims become cautious and distrustful with all people; they expect the assailant to be everywhere.

The prevailing stereotype of rape in the 1970s was that women should feel ashamed and guilty after being raped, but that was not the primary reaction in most victims. Instead, most expressed a fear of physical injury, death, or retaliation.

The Burgess and Holmstrom study was twofold, with a clinical focus on victim response and an institutional focus. The study made clear that rape does not end with the assailant's departure; rather the profound suffering of the victim can be diminished or heightened by the response of those who staff the police stations, hospitals, and courthouses. Ironically, the institutions that society has designated to help victims may in fact cause further damage.<sup>45</sup> The clinical descriptive findings from the Burgess and Holmstrom study were published and used by rape crisis staff as well as mental health staff.

Rape trauma syndrome was accepted as a nursing diagnosis into the North American Nursing Diagnosis Association official nomenclature in 1979. Also included were 2 variations of rape trauma syndrome: silent response to rape and compounded reaction to rape. The silent response to rape was observed in persons who had never told anyone of a rape experience, but later (months or years) the assault was revealed. In the Burgess and Holmstrom study, women talked freely of these early experiences in the context of the new assault experience. In the compounded rape trauma, the individual has a primary presenting medical or psychological disorder through which the rape trauma symptoms are filtered. Examples include elders with dementia; persons with a psychiatric disorder or physical disorder; persons with an intellectual disability; and persons with somatic complaints, multiple ED visits, substance abuse, eating disorders, and depressive disorders.

## HISTORY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA

*Rape trauma syndrome* preceded the term *posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)* by 6 years. When the American Psychiatric Association's Work Group on Anxiety Disorders was considering how to classify a number of traumatic events (eg, combat stress, natural disasters, rape trauma), it decided to make *PTSD* an umbrella term under which the various life-threatening events could fall.<sup>46</sup>

The term *PTSD* came into the official nosology of the American Psychiatric Association in 1980 with the publication of the third edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*.<sup>46</sup> The development of this term is believed to date back to early Greek and Roman war literature, which suggests the longstanding strong (but not exclusive) association of this disorder with military combat. After the American Civil War, the psychological problems of combat veterans were called "soldier's heart." In the latter half of the 19th century, the focus shifted to transportation and industrial accidents.

The modern conceptualization of PTSD originated with the European neurologists Jean-Martin Charcot and Hermann Oppenheim, who treated victims of railroad and industrial accidents in the late 19th century. Both Charcot and Oppenheim regarded the disorder as stemming from an acute fright or emotional shock. Charcot used the term *traumatic hysteria* to describe a condition of the mind that evolved not from the physical effects of the traumatic accident but rather from the patient's interpretation of it. Oppenheim rejected the hysterical nature of the condition theorizing that it resulted from the acute emotional shock induced by the traumatic event that injured the nervous system. Both DSM-I and DSM-II failed to recognize these earlier insights, and they did not dignify the condition with a diagnosis. The introduction of the PTSD diagnosis into DSM-III represented a breakthrough in that it (1) recognized a common syndrome or pathway shared by victims of disparate traumatic events, (2) formulated specific criteria for its diagnosis, (3) did not imply a preexisting mental defect, and (4) did not regard the condition as necessarily temporary.<sup>47</sup>

The theme of traumatic memories haunting people after experiencing overwhelming terror has been used in literature from Homer to Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. By the late 1850s, Briquet<sup>48</sup> suggested a link between the symptoms of hysteria and childhood histories of trauma. During this time, a small Anglo-Saxon literature emerged documenting responses to accidents (eg, "railway spine" after train accidents) and nostalgia for war trauma ("soldier's heart"). The relationship between trauma and psychiatric illness, however, only began to be explored in the last 2 decades of the 19th century when neurologist Charcot lectured on the functional effects of trauma on behavior.<sup>49</sup>

Charcot's student Pierre Janet undertook one of the first systematic studies of the relationship between trauma and psychiatric symptoms and delivered a major paper at the Harvard Medical School in 1906. Janet realized that different temperaments predisposed people to deal with trauma with different coping styles. He coined the term *subconscious* to describe the collection of memories that form the mental schemes that include the person's interaction with the environment. He suggested it was the interplay of memory systems and temperament that made each person unique and complex.<sup>49</sup>

Although one of Freud's earliest published works was *Studies on Hysteria*, he later shifted from a PTSD paradigm of neurosis to a paradigm that centered on intrapsychic fantasy. In a later work, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, he once again addressed the issue of traumatic neurosis and looked at trauma as disequilibrium. The history of the development of PTSD was intensified around war and combat stress. Despite such recognition, though, systematic inquiry into the phenomenon of posttraumatic stress was remarkably late in coming. It was not until 1980 that the condition was determined to be a separate and distinct diagnostic category by the American Psychiatric Association.

## HISTORY OF PTSD DIAGNOSIS

There have been several revisions to the PTSD diagnostic criteria.<sup>46,50</sup> The last major revision was in the fifth edition of the DSM, published in 2013. The criteria for a PTSD diagnosis in the DSM-5 follows.<sup>46,50</sup>

### DSM-5 PTSD Diagnostic Criteria

- **Criterion A (1 required):** The person was exposed to: death, threatened death, actual or threatened serious injury, or actual or threatened sexual violence, in the following way(s):
  - Direct exposure
  - Witnessing the trauma

- Learning that a relative or close friend was exposed to a trauma
- Indirect exposure to aversive details of the trauma, usually in the course of professional duties (eg, first responders, medics)
- **Criterion B (1 required):** The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced, in the following way(s):
  - Intrusive thoughts
  - Nightmares
  - Flashbacks
  - Emotional distress after exposure to traumatic reminders
  - Physical reactivity after exposure to traumatic reminders
- **Criterion C (1 required):** Avoidance of trauma-related stimuli after the trauma, in the following way(s):
  - Trauma-related thoughts or feelings
  - Trauma-related reminders
- **Criterion D (2 required):** Negative thoughts or feelings that began or worsened after the trauma, in the following way(s):
  - Inability to recall key features of the trauma
  - Overly negative thoughts and assumptions about oneself or the world
  - Exaggerated blame of self or others for causing the trauma
  - Negative affect
  - Decreased interest in activities
  - Feeling isolated
  - Difficulty experiencing positive affect
- **Criterion E (2 required):** Trauma-related arousal and reactivity that began or worsened after the trauma, in the following way(s):
  - Irritability or aggression
  - Risky or destructive behavior
  - Hypervigilance
  - Heightened startle reaction
  - Difficulty concentrating
  - Difficulty sleeping
- **Criterion F (required):** Symptoms last for more than 1 month.
- **Criterion G (required):** Symptoms create distress or functional impairment (eg, social, occupational).
- **Criterion H (required):** Symptoms are not due to medication, substance use, or other illness.



— **Two specifications:**

- *Dissociative Specification:* In addition to meeting criteria for diagnosis, an individual experiences high levels of either of the following in reaction to trauma-related stimuli:
  1. Depersonalization: Experience of being an outside observer of or detached from oneself (eg, feeling as if “this is not happening to me” or if one were in a dream).
  2. Derealization: Experience of unreality, distance, or distortion (eg, “things are not real”).
- *Delayed Specification:* Full diagnostic criteria are not met until at least 6 months after the trauma(s), although onset of symptoms may occur immediately.

**Comparison of DSM-5 PTSD Symptoms to DSM-IV PTSD Symptoms**

Overall the symptoms of PTSD are generally comparable between DSM-5 and DSM-IV. A few key alterations include the following:

- The revision of Criterion A1 in DSM-5 narrowed qualifying traumatic events such that the unexpected death of family or a close friend due to natural causes is no longer included.
- Criterion A2, requiring that the response to a traumatic event involved intense fear, hopelessness, or horror, was removed from DSM-5. Research suggests that Criterion A2 did not improve diagnostic accuracy.
- The avoidance and numbing cluster (Criterion C) in DSM-IV was separated into 2 criteria in DSM-5: Criterion C (avoidance) and Criterion D (negative alterations in cognitions and mood). This results in a requirement that a PTSD diagnosis includes at least 1 avoidance symptom.
- Three new symptoms were added:
  - Criterion D (negative thoughts or feelings that began or worsened after the trauma): (1) Overly negative thoughts and assumptions about oneself or the world; and (2) negative affect
  - Criterion E (trauma-related arousal and reactivity that began or worsened after the trauma): (3) Reckless or destructive behavior

## TERMINOLOGY

### RAPE OR SEXUAL ASSAULT?

Although legal definitions of rape and sexual assault vary greatly from state to state, in this book the terms will be used interchangeably. They refer to any unwanted contact of the sexual organs of 1 person, whether male or female; by another person, regardless of gender; with penetration, however slight, or without penetration; and with or without resulting physical injury.

In 2012 there was an important change within the FBI’s Uniform Crime Report (UCR) Summary Reporting System (SRS). “Forcible rape” had been defined by the UCR SRS as “the carnal knowledge of a female, forcibly and against her will.” That definition, unchanged since 1927, was outdated and narrow. It only included forcible male penile penetration of a female vagina. The new definition is: “The penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.”<sup>251</sup>

For the first time ever, the new definition includes any gender of victim and perpetrator, not just women being raped by men. It also recognizes that rape with an object can be as traumatic as penile-vaginal rape. This definition also includes instances in which the victim is unable to give consent because of temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity. Furthermore, because many rapes are facilitated by drugs or alcohol, the new definition recognizes that a victim can be incapacitated and thus unable to consent because of ingestion of drugs or alcohol. Similarly, a victim may be legally incapable of consent because of age. The ability of the victim to give consent must be determined in accordance with individual state statutes. Physical resistance is not required on the part of the victim to demonstrate lack of consent.

The UCR is the national “report card” on serious crime. What gets reported through the UCR is how we, collectively, view crime in this country. Police departments submit data on reported crimes and arrests to the UCR SRS. Even though most states have more expansive definitions of rape in their criminal codes, they had to report the smaller number of crimes falling under the more narrow UCR SRS definition. This meant that the statistics that were reported nationally were both inaccurate and undercounted. Because the new definition is more inclusive, reported crimes of rape are likely to increase. This does not mean that rape has increased but simply that it is more accurately reported. In addition, the UCR program will collect data based on the historical definition of rape, enabling law enforcement to track consistent trend data until the statistical differences between the old and new definitions are more fully understood. The new UCR SRS definition of rape does not change federal or state criminal codes or affect charging and prosecution on the federal, state, or local level; it simply means that rape will be more accurately reported nationwide. The Office of Violence Against Women (OVW) worked closely with White House Advisor on Violence Against Women, Lynn Rosenthal, and the Office of the Vice President, as well as multiple Department of Justice divisions, to modernize the definition.<sup>52</sup>

#### HE OR SHE?

Although it is acknowledged that men are also victims of sexual assault, female pronouns will primarily be used for the purpose of this book because women are more often victims. When different needs of male and female victims are addressed, the appropriate pronouns will be used.

#### VICTIM, SURVIVOR, OR PATIENT?

Because this book, for the most part, focuses on the period directly after the rape, we have chosen to use the terms *patient* or *victim of rape*. *Victims* are those who present acutely after experiencing an assault; *survivors* are those who are not in the acute stages and have survived the assault; and *thrivers* are those who in the aftermath of an assault are thriving and functioning well despite the trauma of sexual violence. We do recognize that an important goal of recovery is to help the victim move from feeling like a victim of the rape to becoming a survivor and then, ultimately, a thriver. This process may happen very quickly for some individuals and very slowly for others. It may take days, weeks, months, or even years, but it rarely occurs during the first few hours.

However, we also recognize that first and foremost whenever the nurse, SANE, or SAFE provides care they are providing medical care to their patient. We must remember that it is always the care of the patient that is the goal of the SANE as a medical professional.

#### SANE OR SAFE?

Because today the majority of medical practitioners with advanced training in sexual assault management and evidence collection are nurses, we will primarily use the term

*SANE*. When we refer to the *SAFE*, we are also referring to a non-nurse, usually a physician or physician assistant, who has also had advanced training in sexual assault management and evidence collection.

### SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE TEAM

When we refer to *SART*, we are referring to formal as well as informal collaborative “teams.” They may respond as a unit, or they may work independently, but they work cooperatively in meeting the needs of victims of rape. It is important to remember that there are many options for *SART* operation. These are discussed in detail in Chapters 12 and 13.

## ROLE OF NURSING

Nursing is and will continue to be a major player in the trauma field. The antirape movement helped catapult nursing to the status of a major provider of health care services to victims of abuse. The JCAHO has suggested that, in the future, forensic nurses be staffed in EDs. The requirement to educate nurses in the fundamentals of forensic science was firmly established in 1997 when the JCAHO published its revised standards for patient assessment. The guidelines required that all staff members be educated to identify victims of abuse, violence, and neglect and be able to collect and safeguard physical evidence associated with a known or potential criminal act.<sup>53</sup> It opened doors for nurses to develop interdependent relationships with other health care providers, initiate courses and programs of research in victimology and traumatology, influence legislation and health care policy, provide expert testimony in criminal and civil legal cases, and define the new specialty of forensic nursing. However, sexual violence still affects the lives of hundreds of thousands of women and children each year. Health care professionals could be even more influential in case finding and treatment of trauma as well as in designing research and outcome protocols for the interventions aimed at preventing abuse and decreasing the number of victims. Such interventions must target the perpetrators or potential perpetrators of sexual assault. The foothold of skilled investigator nurses in EDs and their preparation for collecting and presenting evidence as well as testifying in judicial proceedings is a major contribution. The advance of the nurse to become a certified Adult/Adolescent (*SANE-A*) or Pediatric (*SANE-P*) nurse examiner has firmly established a forensic nursing role.

Rape trauma is now on the radar screen for all disciplines. The pioneers have provided the foundation for the next generation, and they need to keep motivating young clinicians and scholars to forge ahead. The Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner program, whereby specially trained nurses (rather than hospital ED physicians) provide comprehensive psychological, medical, and forensic services for sexual assault victims, is the major model of treatment in the United States, as well as in a number of other countries. Hopefully one day specially trained forensic examiners will be available in every hospital to provide care whenever a victim of rape asks for help.

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# INDEX

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## A

- Abbreviated Injury Scale (AIS), 460t, 460–462
- abdomen, injuries to, 442, 442f, 454f
- Aberdeen Proving Grounds, 300
- ABO blood group, 148
- abortion
- DNA testing of fetus, 146
  - forced, in human trafficking, 382, 409, 410, 411t
- abrasions, 73, 73f–74f, 75, 112, 438, 439f, 512
- Academy of Forensic Nursing, 267–269
- Academy of Nursing, 274
- ACEP. *See* American College of Emergency Physicians
- ACEs. *See* adverse childhood experiences
- ACHA-NCHA. *See* American College Health Association–National College Health Assessment
- acid phosphatase (AP) enzyme, 104–105, 147–148
- acquaintance rape, 107, 221, 290
- acquaintance rapists, 310
- ACTH. *See* adrenocorticotrophic hormone
- acute genital injury, 109, 114–117, 116t, 188t
- acute stress disorder (ASD), 211, 290
- acute stress responses
- acute trauma and memory, 243–245
  - dissociation, 243
  - freezing response, 242
  - threat appraisal, 238–241, 239f–240f, 241t
  - tonic immobility, 242–243, 242f,
- adolescents
- and genital injuries, 34, 82
  - hymen in, 27f, 32, 40
  - protocols for forensic exams, 7–8
  - teeth, 56
  - trauma therapy for, 407
  - views on oral sex, 58
- adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH), 240
- adult protective services (APS), 427, 428, 452
- Advanced Nursing Practice: A National Framework* (CNA), 266
- adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), 246
- advocates, 124–125, 133, 247t–248t, 250, 262, 283, 284–285, 450–451
- AGI. *See* anogenital injury
- Air Force, US, 296, 300. *See also* military units
- AIS. *See* Abbreviated Injury Scale
- Alaska
- human trafficking in, 391
  - risky sexual behavior among Alaska Native women, 219
  - use of *Second Opinion* software, 275
- alcohol
- abuse after rape, 217–218, 219
  - alcohol myopia, 244
  - as coercion, in human trafficking, 390, 412t
  - in college campus assaults, 309–310
  - to commit DFSA, 343–344
  - as exit strategy postassault, 70
  - intoxicated suspects, 199
  - and IPV, 365
  - and seminal fluid evidence, 107
  - stages of intoxication, 345t
  - and victim control, 67, 69, 181
  - voluntary use of, 67, 69, 181, 244, 333
- Alprazolam (Xanax), 340t, 347, 348t
- ALS. *See* Lou Gehrig’s disease
- alternate light source (ALS), 84f, 107, 136, 198, 513

American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment (ACHA-NCHA), 309, 310

American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP), 8, 103, 488t

American Indian women, and risky sexual behavior, 219

*American Journal of Nursing*, 260

*American Journal of Psychiatry*, 9

American Nurses Association (ANA), 6, 266, 284

American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), 265

American Psychiatric Association, 10, 11

amygdala, 239f, 239–240, 242, 243, 246

amylase (enzyme), 147

ANA. *See* American Nurses Association

anal anatomy, 50, 50f–53f, 52–54

    anal canal, 50, 52f

    anal injuries, 50, 51f, 64, 187f

    anal verge, 52, 52f

    anus, 19f, 44–45, 44f–45f, 50, 52f

    anus orifice, 50

analogs, 344–347, 350t, 350–351, 351–352

anal sex, 54

anastomosis of hymen tissue, 27–28

ANCC. *See* American Nurses Credentialing Center

anger, as motivational intent, 69

annular hymen, 31f, 32

anogenital injury (AGI), 110, 112, 117, 189

anogenital trauma, 109–119, 109f–110f, 113f, 116t, 118t

anoscope and anoscopy, 52, 53f, 109–110, 183, 186f

antihistamines, 338t–339t, 351, 352t

antirape movement, 2–3, 15

anxiety, 214–215, 222

AP. *See* acid phosphatase enzyme

APS. *See* adult protective services

Army, US, 155, 295–296, 300. *See also* military units

Army Nurse Corps, 295

arrestee index, 155

art, rape as common theme in, 2

ASD. *See* acute stress disorder

asphyxia, 80, 471, 497

    asphyxiation, 495

    positional asphyxia, 513

assisted living and elder sexual abuse, 447–448

Association of Genitourinary Medicine, 103

asusto (scared, soul loss), 406

autopsy, 463–464

## B

backflow, 48, 50

back injuries, 84

bacterial vaginosis, 162, 162t, 164, 165f, 168t

balanus (glans penis), 45

Bartholin's glands, 19f, 27, 87

battered women movement, 4

Bay Area Women Against Rape (BAWAR), 2

BDNF. *See* brain-derived neurotrophic factor

behaviors

    alcohol's effect on, 65

    characteristic of abusive relationships, 320t

    Charcot on trauma and, 11

    eating disordered, 219

    patient, and past trauma, 250

    risky sexual, after assault, 218–219

    self-harming, 223

    staging, 468, 469f, 470

    of victims and abusers in IPV, 365

*See also* neurobiology of traumatic stress responses after sexual assault

Benner, Patricia, 269

benzodiazepines, 340t–341t, 347, 348t, 349

Beyond the Pleasure Principle (Freud), 11

bicuspid, 56

biological evidence found in sexual assault, 133–139, 135f, 138f

    chain of custody, 142, 143f, 144

    evidence from other items or places, 139

    packaging evidence, 139–141, 143f

*See also* DNA

birth control

    anal sex as, 54

    lack of use of, as risky sexual behavior, 219

    natural family planning, 44

bite marks, 75

blitz approach to victim, 66, 440, 472, 475

blood evidence, 134, 135, 135f

    in forensic examination, 119

    in suspect forensic examination, 196



- blunt force trauma, 72–73, 77, 80, 112, 438, 472, 495
- bodily excretions, 134
- body piercing, 22f, 56, 57f
- bookend card, 500, 500f
- Bounds, Beverly H., 260
- brain-derived nerotrophic factor (BDNF), 246
- British common law, 3
- British Forensic Psychiatric, 221
- Brownmiller, Susan, 2
- bruises and bruising (ecchymoses), 75–78, 75f–77f, 78f–80f
- assessment for, 438
  - documentation, 445–446
  - in elder abuse, 438, 439f
  - fingertip, 84, 86, 86f
  - of mouth, 75, 83f
  - in nongenital injuries, 108
  - restraint, 78
  - in strangulation, 78–80, 78f–80f, 512
  - trauma masquerading as accidental, 430–431
- buccal swabs and swabbing, 107, 119, 136, 158, 188t, 194, 196, 513
- Bureau of Justice, US Bureau of Justice Statistics, 63–64, 183
- Burgess, Ann Wolbert, 4, 8–10, 209, 260
- ## C
- CAC. *See* child advocacy center
- California
- “Grim Sleeper” case, 151
  - and human trafficking, 387t, 388t, 389, 390, 391, 396
  - sexual assault protocol, 103
- California State Court of Appeals, 1
- camera, 90, 108, 500
- Campus Sexual Assault Study* (2008), 309, 310
- Campus Sexual Assault Victims’ Bill of Rights, 312, 313, 320–321, 323–325
- Canadian Nurses Association (CNA), 266
- cancer
- from HPV, 169
  - penile, 47
  - testicular, 48
  - vulvar, 20
- candida, 164, 165f, 166f
- cannabis, 342t, 349–350
- Cannon, Walter, 237
- cards
- bookend, 500, 500f
  - identification, 389
  - pocket, with safety information, 369
- Care for Victims of Sexual Assault Task Force, 300, 301, 302t
- carotid arteries, 497, 513
- carotid artery ganglion, 497, 513
- carunculae myrtiformes, 34, 34f
- case studies
- behaviors of abusive relationships, 320
  - college sexual assault, 317–318
  - DFSA, 354f, 354–355
  - of elder sexual abuse, 430–435, 446–450, 453–455, 453f–455f
  - of human trafficking, 390, 416–417, 416f–417f
  - of IPV, 373–375, 373f–375f
  - in sexual homicide, 462, 463f, 473
  - strangulation, 512
  - suspect examination protocols, 198–199
- catecholamines, 243, 245
- Catholic Health Association, 124
- CBT. *See* cognitive-behavioral therapy
- CCR. *See* coordinated community response
- CE. *See* continuing education
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- on elder abuse, 437
  - on emergency contraception, 176
  - on HIV and human trafficking, 409
  - on HIV nPEP, 173–175, 174f
  - STI and HIV treatment guidelines, 122–123, 161, 167, 169, 189
  - on strangulation, 495
  - use of HIS and ISS, 461
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), 428–429
- central nervous system (CNS)
- assessing injury to, in elder victims, 440
  - and carotid artery ganglion, 497
  - effect of drugs on, 333, 334, 343, 346, 349, 350, 351
- cervical os, 40f, 41

- cervix, 40–41, 40f–43f
- chain of custody
  - and admissibility issues, 120, 142, 143f, 144
  - for male victims, 188
  - for photographs, 92
  - in suspect forensic examination, 197
- Charcot, Jean-Martin, 11
- chest injuries, 76f, 79f, 84, 84f, 441, 441f
- Chicago Homicide Data Set, 460
- child advocacy center (CAC), 263
- childhood sexual assaults
  - impact on adult sexual problems, 222
  - impact on PTSD, 212
  - and self-harming behaviors, 223
  - STIs in, 122, 195
  - and substance abuse, 223
- Chlamydia trachomatis*, 161–162, 162t, 164, 167, 168t
- chloral hydrate, 353
- chromosomes (DNA), 48, 145
- chronic stress response, 245–246
- CIES. *See* clinical injury extent score
- circumcision, 22, 47
- civil rights movement, 260
- Clery, Jeanne, 312
- Clery Act, 313–314, 325–329
- clinical implications of sexual assault, 224–226, 246–249
  - early interventions to reduce adverse health consequences, 250–251
  - patient behavior and past trauma, 250
  - and SANEs, 250
  - sexual assault advocates, 250
- clinical injury extent score (CIES), 115
- Clinical Trauma Assessment (CTA), 210
- Clinton, Bill, 4
- clitoral hood (prepuce), 20, 21f, 22f, 113f
- clitoris, 19f, 20, 21f
- Clonazepam, 340t, 347, 348t,
- clothing
  - abrasive, 73, 75
  - providing to patient, 90, 125
  - of suspect, 139, 197
  - of victim, 104, 119, 133, 138, 140, 437, 464
  - See also* DNA; forensic examination
- CMS. *See* Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
- CNA. *See* Canadian Nurses Association
- CNS. *See* central nervous system
- Code of Ethics for Nurses With Interpretive Statements*, 266t, 274
- CODIS (Combined DNA Index System), 105, 146, 148, 151, 155–156, 158
- coercion
  - in human trafficking, 385–386, 389–392
  - in IPV, 320t, 361, 364, 369
  - in rape law reform, 3
- cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), 251
  - trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy, 226, 407
- cognitive processing therapy (CPT), 226, 407
- collapsed immobility, 243
- college campus sexual assaults
  - campus sexual assault victims' bill of rights, 312, 320–321, 323–325
  - case study, 317–318, 320
  - characteristic behaviors of abusive relationships, 320t
  - culture and dynamics of, 311–312
  - impact on health care providers, 315–321
  - by known acquaintances on, 190
  - regulations that govern colleges, 312–315
  - SART response to, 321–322
  - sexual violence risk reduction tips, 318t–319t
  - students as vulnerable to, 310–311, 316
    - male sexual assault on, 182
- Colorado, protocols on suspect examinations, 194, 198
- colposcope and colposcopy, 88, 89, 90, 109f, 109–110
- Combined DNA Index System. *See* CODIS
- community change effectiveness of SANE programs, 483–484
- Comprehensive Sexual Assault Assessment Tool (CSAAT), 92, 93t–94t, 94–95
- computed tomography scan (CT), 440
- con approach to victim, 66
- conception, products of, 134, 146
  - See also* pregnancy

- condom  
 and absence of DNA evidence, 156  
 discharge contamination, 50  
 lack of use, 219, 409  
   lack of use, in IPV, 363, 365  
 and risky sexual behavior, after assault, 219  
 use of, by offender, 107
- confusion, as offender exit strategy, 70
- Congress, US  
 enacts Trafficking Victim Protection Act, 385  
 fails to pass EC legislation, 124  
 passes Prison Rape Elimination Act, 183  
 support for reforming rape laws, 3–4
- consciousness-raising (CR) groups, 2
- continued presence (CP), 398
- continuing education (CE), 264, 269–270
- contusions, 75, 75f–77f, 77–78, 445–446, 512.  
*See also* bruises and bruising
- coordinated community response (CCR), 263  
 CCR team, 199, 281
- corona of the glans, 47
- correctional facilities, 183
- corticotropin-releasing hormone (CRH), 240, 240f
- cortisol, 240f, 240–241, 241t, 243–245
- counseling, 177, 189, 265, 282t, 313  
 and crisis intervention, 125  
 for elder sexual abuse, 446–447  
 and male victims, 221
- courts-martial, 296–298, 297t
- Cowper, William, 49
- Cowper's glands, 47, 49
- CP. *See* continued presence
- CPT. *See* cognitive processing therapy
- Crawford v. Washington, 286
- crescentic hymen, 31f, 32, 38f
- CRH. *See* corticotropin-releasing hormone
- cricoid cartilage, 498
- Crime Classification Manual, 470
- crime classification, in sexual homicide, 464, 466
- crime scene indicators, 467–468, 470, 474–475
- crisis intervention and counseling, 124–125
- cryptorchidism (undescended testes), 48
- CSAAT. *See* Comprehensive Sexual Assault Assessment Tool
- CSI effect, 156
- CT. *See* computed tomography scan
- CTA. *See* Clinical Trauma Assessment
- culture(s)  
 college campus, 310–312, 316  
 defined, 311  
 effect on victims of trafficking, 405–406, 410, 414–415  
 military, 295  
 view of hymen in some, 27
- cuspid, 56
- cuspid of tooth, 56
- custody battles, 365, 367, 370, 372t
- cut wounds, 80–81, 81f
- cystocele (bladder herniation), 23, 24f
- ## D
- Daubert standard, 154
- death  
 from drugs used for DFSA, 334, 344, 345t  
 from elder sexual abuse, 429, 445  
 fear of  
   by trafficked victims, 389, 400, 409, 410, 411t–412t  
   and PTSD, 11  
 and IPV, 365  
 from obstruction of airway, 82  
 from strangulation, 78, 84, 495, 497, 498, 499, 513  
*See also* sexual homicide
- Debbie Smith Crime Victims Protection Act*, 6
- debris collection, 88, 119–120, 153, 183, 188t, 196, 464
- debt bondage, 385, 390, 413t
- defense attorney, 120, 152, 154, 264, 284
- defense cascade (fight or flight) 237, 238, 239
- defense fallacy, 152
- defensive wounds, 81, 81f, 84, 84f–85f
- demonstrative evidence, 142
- Department of Defense, US, 295–296, 300–305.  
*See also* military units
- Department of Education, US, 309, 314
- Department of Health and Human Services, US, 386, 392

- Department of Justice, US
  - collaboration with other professional organizations, 288
  - and human trafficking, 392
  - on incarcerated individuals, 183
  - on modernizing definition of rape, 14
  - National Protocol for Sexual Assault Medical Forensic Examinations*, 194, 247
  - National Sexual Assault Protocol*, 123–124
  - Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), 6, 198, 262
  - Office on Violence Against Women, 4, 103
- Department of Labor, US, 382
- Department of State, US (USDOS)
  - Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report, 383
- Departments of Adult and Child Protective Services, 389
- depersonalization, 13, 211, 402t, 470
- deportation of immigrants, 369, 389, 413t
- depression
  - and gender differences, 222
  - impact on victim, 213–214
  - and IPV, 365
  - and trafficking, 399–400
- derivatives (immigration issue), 398
- DESNOS. *See* disorders of extreme stress not otherwise specified
- developmental disabilities
  - suspects with, 199
  - victims with, 67, 427
- DFSA. *See* drug-facilitated sexual assault
- Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*
  - DSM-III PTSD diagnostic criteria, 10–11
  - DSM-IV PTSD diagnostic criteria, 13
  - DSM-5
    - on anxiety, 214–215
    - criteria for ASD, 211
    - on PTSD, 11–13, 95, 209, 211, 237–238, 401
    - on substance abuse, 217
- diagrams to document injuries, 90
- Diazepam (Valium), 340t, 347, 348t
- disability
  - and elder sexual abuse, 427, 448
  - and human trafficking, 384, 410
  - intellectual, 10, 183
  - and IPV, 370
- discharge instructions in strangulation, 512
- discovery (in criminal case), 154
- disease prevention among IPV victims, 365
- disorders of extreme stress not otherwise specified (DESNOS), 401, 402t–403t
- dissociation, 222, 243, 402t, 404f
- dissociative anesthetics and analogs, 351–352
- distal of tooth, 56
- distance learning, 274
- divorce, 365
- DNA
  - basics of, 144f–145f, 144–147
  - chromosomes, 48
  - CODIS, 155–156
  - emerging technology, 157–158
  - evidence collection, 105–107, 133–135
    - from bite marks, 75
    - from bruises, 75f–76f, 79f
    - from seminal fluid, 107, 133
    - from teeth, 58
  - genetic markers, 151
  - preserving jurisdiction, 159
  - recovery techniques, 8, 47, 104
  - role in legal proceedings, 152–153
    - explaining absence of, in court, 156–157
    - presenting in court, 153–155, 154f
  - serology and other protein marker testing, 147–148
  - suspect's, 66, 155
  - statistics of individual profiles, 152
  - testing of sexual assault evidence, 148–151
  - victim's, 104
- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), 268
- DOL. *See* Department of Labor, US
- dopamine, 240–241, 241t
- driver's license
  - and identify theft, 190
  - as offender's trophy, 467–468
- drug-facilitated sexual assault (DFSA)
  - case studies, 354–355
  - challenges of DFSA investigations, 334–336, 336t–343t

- in college campus assaults, 309–310
- drugs used to commit
- alcohol (ethanol), 343–344, 345t
  - antihistamines, 351, 352t
  - benzodiazepines, 347, 348t, 349
  - cannabis, 349–350
  - chloral hydrate, 353
  - dissociative anesthetics and analogs, 351–352
  - GBH and analogs, 344, 346f, 346–347
  - miscellaneous drugs, 353–354
  - opiates and fentanyl analogs, 350t, 350–351
  - tricyclic antidepressants, 353
  - “Z” drugs, 352–353
- and victim control, 67, 69
- Drug-Induced Rape Prevention and Punishment Act 1996, 334
- drugs
- as coercion in human trafficking, 390–391, 412t
  - and IPV, 363, 365
  - as offender exit strategy, 70
  - victim’s use of, 67, 181, 217–218, 223
- See also* drug-facilitated sexual assault (DFSA)
- DSM. *See Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*
- Duke University, 316
- E**
- eating disordered behavior, 219
- EB. *See en bloc* memory lapse
- EC. *See* emergency contraception
- ecchymoses (bruises and bruising), 75, 75f–77f, 77–78, 86, 86f, 108, 430–431, 438, 439f, 512
- edema, 20, 78, 112
- ejaculation, 49
- elder sexual abuse
- assessment of abuse, 438–444, 439f–442f, 444f
  - case studies, 430–435, 446–450, 453–455, 453f–455f
  - detecting injury in, 435–438, 436t
  - documentation, 445–446
  - early detection and reporting, 425–426
  - hospital admission for, 444–445
  - intervention services for elders, 446–449
  - levels of care for elders, 425, 426t
  - literature on, 426–427
  - nursing home staff, 451
  - prevention of, 449–450
  - reporting and investigating, 428–435
  - and sexual homicide
    - elder female, 473–475, 475f
    - suggested approaches, 450–451
- Embrey, Ellen, 300
- EMDR. *See* eye movement desensitization reprocessing
- emergency contraception (EC), 175–176, 175t
- “back door approach” for, 317
  - California State Court of Appeals on, 1
  - and Catholic hospitals, 482
  - effect upon PTSD, 89, 123–124, 251
  - in IPV, 368
  - offered by SANE programs, 1, 6, 177, 290, 482
- en bloc (EB) memory lapse, 344
- endogenous opioids, 240–241, 241t
- environment and victim’s injuries, 88–89
- epididymides, 48
- epiglottis, 498
- epinephrine, 239–240, 241t
- erection, 45
- erythema, 80
- estrogen
- effect upon hymen, 25f, 27–34, 28f, 29t, 30t, 30f, 32f, 34f, 36f, 38f, 39, 87
  - effect upon labia minora, 26–27
  - effect upon vestibular bands, 22
  - lack of, and injuries to vagina, 87
  - lack of, and lichen sclerosus, 20
  - produced by ovaries, 44
  - for treatment of urethral prolapse, 25
- ethanol. *See* alcohol
- eversion, 41
- evidence collection
- DNA, 105, 106–107
  - in elder sexual abuse, 437–438
  - in male sexual assault, 120, 183, 184t, 188, 188t
  - mouth, 56, 57f, 58
  - problems in DFSA, 335–336
  - protocol, 103, 205t–206t

- in sexual homicide, 464
- in strangulation, 513
- from suspect, 194–195
- time frame for, 104, 106, 286

evidentiary examination

- documentation, 198
- errors in conducting, 124
- purpose of, 104, 119
- SANE, 5, 7–8
- suspect examination, 193–198
- time frame, 89, 104

exclusion result, 146

extremities, injuries to, 84, 84f–86f, 86, 107, 442, 442f

extropion, 41

eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR), 226, 407

## F

face, injuries to, 77, 82, 83f

faint response. *See* tonic immobility

faith-based organizations, 189

fallopian tubes (oviducts), 44

family members of sexually abused elders, 448–449

FB. *See* fragmentary blackout

FBI. *See* Federal Bureau of Investigation

FDA. *See* Food and Drug Administration, US

fear

- in campus sexual assault, 310, 311, 313
- of contracting STIs, 122, 162
- of death, 10
- and human trafficking, 389–392
- in IPV, 363t, 365
- in male sexual assault victims, 181–182, 222
- neurobiology, 239, 242, 246,
  - fear structure of brain, 239f
- used against immigrants, 369, 389
- of vaginal trauma, 113

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

- Behavioral Science Unit, 466
- and immigration issues, 398
- initiates CODIS, 146
- National Missing Person DNA Database program, 155

Uniform Crime Report (UCR) Summary Reporting System (SRS), 13–14, 181, 381–382, 459

female anal anatomy, 50, 50f–53f, 52–54

female genital anatomy

- female reproductive parts, 39–41, 39f–45f, 44, 86–87
- genitalia, 19f, 19–20, 21f–26f, 22–23, 25–27
  - Bartholin's glands, 27
  - clitoral hood (prepuce), 20, 21f, 22f
  - clitoris, 20, 21f, 22
  - labia majora, 19f, 19, 20, 23, 25f, 25–26
  - labia minora, 19f, 20, 25, 26–27, 26f
  - mons pubis, 19, 19f, 21f
  - paraurethral ductal openings (Skene's glands), 25
  - urethral meatus, 22–23, 23f
  - vaginal vault, 26
  - vestibular bands (urethral ligaments), 22, 23f
  - vestibule, 20
  - vulva, 20
- hymen, 27f–28f, 27–34, 29t, 30t, 30f–38f, 37
- posterior fourchette, 39, 39f

female genital mutilation, 87

female pelvic anatomy, normal, 24f, 53f

female sexual homicide, elder, 473–475, 475f

female sexual offenders, 181

fentanyl analogs, 350t, 350–351

fight-or-flight (defense cascade), 237, 238, 239

fimbriated hymen, 31f, 32

finger nail

- abrasions, 73, 81
- and cervical injury, 82
- clippings and scrapings, 104, 106, 134, 137, 138f, 153, 188t, 195
- marks in strangulation, 78

fingertip bruising, 78, 80f, 84, 86, 86f, 438

first responders, 133

5 Cs of SART operation, 282t

*FKBP5* gene, 246

fluorescein, 135

fMRI. *See* functional MRI

Food and Drug Administration, US (FDA), 346

Ford, Gerald, 4

- forensic examination
- after the examination, 125
  - anogenital trauma, 109–119
    - consensual *vs.* nonconsensual sex, 111
    - detection methods, 109f–110f, 109–111
    - skin color differences, 112
  - autopsy, 463–464
  - blood evidence, 119
  - debris collection, 119–120
  - documentation, 120–122
  - DNA evidence, 105–107
  - for elder abuse, 434
  - findings in sexual homicide, 469, 470–471, 471f–472f, 475, 475f
  - for human trafficking victims, 410
  - for male sexual assault victims, 183, 184t, 185f–187f, 188, 188t
  - nongenital injuries, 107–109
  - and pregnancy prevention, 123–124
  - urine evidence, 119
- forensic hit, 156
- forensic index, 155
- forensic laboratory analyst, 133, 134, 153, 285
- forensic nurse
- education and qualifications, 259–276
  - education, 268–269
    - continuing education, 269–270
    - what is included, 265–268
    - who should conduct, 264–265
  - role of, 6–8, 15, 496
- Forensic Nursing Certification Board, 267–268
- Forensic Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice* (ANA), 266t, 266, 269, 274
- forensic odontologist, 58
- Forensic Science Service, 333
- foreskin, 47
- formative evaluation of SANE programs, 270, 271t
- 48 hour time frame and ASD, 211
- fossa navicularis, 19f, 39
- fragmentary blackout (FB), 344
- freezing response, 242
- frenulum, 47, 54, 55f
- frequency estimate, 152
- Freud, Sigmund, 11
- Frye standard, 154
- functional MRI (fMRI), 246
- ## G
- GAD. *See* generalized anxiety disorder
- gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GHB), 310, 333, 334, 341t
  - and analogs, 344, 346f, 346–347
- gay and lesbian organizations, 189
- GCS. *See* Glasgow Coma Scale
- gender differences
  - in human trafficking, 404–405
  - impact and recovery issues, 221–223
- gender reassignment surgery, 87
- general adaption syndrome, 237
- generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), 214–215
- genetic markers, 151
- Genital Injury Severity Scale (GISS), 116t, 116–117
- genomic alterations, 246
- GHB. *See* gamma hydroxybutyrate
- Gilded Cage raids, 395–396
- gingiva, 54f, 56, 58
- glans, 45, 46f
- glans penis (balanus), 45
- Glasgow Coma Scale (GCS), 460
- Global Slavery Index, 383
- glutamate, 240–241, 241t
- gonorrhea, 167, 167f, 168t
- Grim Sleeper case, 151
- ## H
- hair samples
  - in male sexual assault, 188t
  - in suspect forensic exam, 105, 134, 195
  - from victim, 106, 134, 137, 140, 335–336
- Halcion (Triazolam), 347, 348t
- Hale, Matthew, 3
- Hamel, Ronald P., 124
- handcuffs, 196f
- hanging, 513
- hard palate, 54f, 56
- Hart's line. *See* posterior fourchette
- Harvard Medical School, 11
- HBV. *See* hepatitis B virus

head injuries, 82, 440, 440f  
hemangioma, 58  
hepatitis B virus (HBV), 161–162, 162t, 164, 168t, 169, 189  
herpes, 162, 163f–164f  
HERS. *See* Hymen Estrogen Response Scale  
heterozygous, 146  
Hillery J. Farias and Samantha Reid Date-Rape Drug Prohibition Act 1999, 334  
hippocampus, 239, 239f, 242, 243, 246  
HIS. *See* Homicide Injury Scale  
HIV. *See* human immunodeficiency virus  
HIV nPEP (nonoccupational postexposure prophylaxis), 161–162, 168t, 172–175, 174f  
Holmstrom, Lynda, 8–10, 209, 215, 446  
homeless, 213, 216, 217, 362, 391  
Homer (poet), 11  
homicide, 70, 70f  
    *See also* sexual homicide  
Homicide Injury Scale (HIS), 460–462, 461t  
homosexuals and homosexuality  
    heterosexual men's fears of, 181, 222  
    organizations and websites for, 189, 190t  
    rates of sexual assault upon, 245  
    same-sex relationships and IPV, 370  
    victim blaming and judgment against, 182  
homozygous, 145  
hormones and role in threat appraisal, 239–240, 240f  
hospitals  
    admission to, for elder sexual abuse, 444–445  
    elder sexual abuse in, 448  
    staff and victim blaming in, 210  
HPA. *See* hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis  
HPV. *See* human papillomavirus virus  
HTRS. *See* Human Trafficking Reporting System  
Huffman Scale, 28  
human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)  
    among human trafficking victims, 382  
    positive individuals and IPV, 362  
    postassault prophylaxis for, 89, 122–123, 161, 162, 162t, 164, 173t, 189  
    sexual assault among HIV+ women, 217  
human papillomavirus (HPV), 47, 162, 162t, 168t, 169, 169f–171f, 171

human trafficking  
    case studies, 390, 416–417, 416f–417f  
    homeless men used in, 391  
    mental health impacts of, 399–407, 401f, 401t–403t  
    overview of, 383–389  
        as contemporary slavery, 383–385  
        legal framework, 385–387, 386t–388t, 389  
    physical health impacts of, 407–414  
        health consequences, 410, 411t–414t  
        physical injuries, 407–408, 408f  
        sexual health, 409–410  
    safety issues in, 395–399, 397f, 397t  
    trafficker-victim dynamics, 389–392  
    trauma-informed practice, 414–415  
    victim identification, 392–395, 394t, 395t  
    worldwide statistics, 383  
Human Trafficking Reporting System (HTRS), 384  
hymen, 19f, 27–31, 27f  
    cultural views of, 27  
    effect of estrogen on, 27–34, 28f, 29t, 30t, 30f, 32f, 34f, 36f, 38f, 39, 87  
    inspection of, 34, 35f–38f, 37  
    post-injury to, 34, 38f  
    terminology to avoid, 27  
    types of, 31–33, 31f–33f  
Hymenaeus (Greek god), 27  
hymenal tags, 33, 33f, 71  
Hymen Estrogen Response Scale (HERS), 28–30, 30t  
hyoid bone, 496f, 497–498  
hypospadias, 23, 47  
hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, 237, 240, 240f  
hypothalamus, 239–440, 239f, 240f  
hypoxia, 499t, 513

## I

IACP. *See* International Association of Chiefs of Police  
IAFN. *See* International Association of Forensic Nurses  
ICE. *See* Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
identity theft, 190  
IDPs. *See* internally displaced persons  
ILO. *See* International Labor Organization



- immigrants and immigration, 369–370, 386, 389–390, 398–399
- Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), 398
- imperforate hymen, 32–33
- IMS. *See* ion-mobility spectrometry
- incapacitated rape, 69
- incarcerated victims, 183, 189
- incisors, 56
- inclusion result, 146
- inconclusive result, 146
- independent living and elder sexual abuse, 447
- Indiana ENA Forensic Committee, 274
- industrial accidents, 10–11
- infertility, 411  
in men, 49
- infibulation (piercing of clitoris), 20, 22, 22f
- injuries  
to anus, 50, 51f, 187f  
Comprehensive Sexual Assault Assessment Tool (CSAAT), 92, 93t–94t, 94–95  
differentiating cervical eversion from, 41, 43f  
dynamics of victimization, 65–67, 68f, 68t, 69–70, 70f  
effect of environment on, 88–89  
in elder abuse, 429–432, 435–438, 436t  
examination process for, 86–89  
examination results, 95f–99f  
frequency of, 113  
location of, 112–113, 113f  
measuring severity of, in sexual homicide, 459–463, 460t–462t, 463f  
mechanisms and types of, 71–73, 71f–81f, 73t, 75, 77–78, 80–81  
medical oral conditions than mimic, 58  
nongenital, 107–109  
patterns to, 112  
to perineum, 44  
posterior fourchette, 39, 64, 82, 112, 117  
post-injury hymen, 34, 34f, 38f  
prevalence of, 117, 119  
research on, 64–65  
severity of, 113–116, 116t, 117, 118t  
sites of, 82, 83f–86f, 84, 86  
statistics, 63–64  
treatment and documentation of physical, 89–91, 91f, 92, 92t  
types, 112
- Injury Severity Score (ISS), 114, 460–462, 462t
- Integrative Treatment of Complex Trauma for Adolescents (ITCTA), 407
- intellectual disabilities in inmates, 183
- internally displaced persons (IDPs), 407
- Internal Revenue Service (IRS), 389
- International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), 198
- International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN)  
collaboration with other organizations, 288  
as credentialing body, 267–268  
educational guidelines, 265–266  
formation, 5  
guidelines on types of injuries, 73, 73t  
and SANE list serve, 271–273  
Web site, 199, 272
- International Labor Organization (ILO), 382
- International Organization for Migration (IOM), 399
- interpreters, 370, 406–407
- intimate partner violence (IPV) and rape  
case studies, 373–375, 373f–375f  
clinical presentation and sequelae, 364t, 364–365  
defined, 361  
domestic violence safety tips, 372t  
elder sexual abuse victims, 450  
future study and interventions for, 371  
identification of abuse, 366–367  
intervention and safety assessment, 368–369  
partner rape, 361–364, 362t–363t  
as public health issue, 495  
RADAR algorithm, 371  
societal reaction to marital rape, 369  
special populations, 369–370  
women of color, 362
- intrauterine device (IUD), 175–176
- IOM. *See* International Organization for Migration
- ion-mobility spectrometry (IMS), 336
- IPV. *See* intimate partner violence
- irresolvable mixture of biological evidence, 134

IRS. *See* Internal Revenue Service

ISS. *See* Injury Severity Score

ITCTA. *See* Integrative Treatment of Complex Trauma for Adolescents

IUD. *See* intrauterine device

## J

“Jane Doe kits,” 141

Janet, Pierre, 11, 407

JCAHO. *See* Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations

John Doe warrant, 159

Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), 6, 15, 30

Joint Military Task Force on Sexual Assault, 6

Journal of Emergency Nursing, 6

jugular veins, 498, 513

juju (black magic), 391, 392

Just Detention International Web site, 190t

## K

ketamine, 342t, 351–352

knife, used as weapon, 68f, 438

Koop, C. Everett, 4

## L

labial separation, 34, 35f, 38f

labial traction (tunneling), 34, 36f–37f, 37, 38f

labia majora, 19f, 19–20, 23, 25f, 25–26

labia minora, 19f, 20, 25–27, 26f

Laborit, Henri, 346

LACE (licensure, accreditation, certification, and education), 267–269

lacerations, 71f, 80, 114, 438–439, 439f

laryngopharynx, 513

larynx, 498–499, 513

law enforcement personnel

    distinguished from SANE, 285

    effect of stress on, 244

    examiner as agent of, 198

    failure to notify, in elder sexual abuse, 452

    as member of SART, 260, 282f, 283–284

    qualifications, 133

    reporting elder abuse to, 428

    role of, 193–198, 284

LC. *See* locus coeruleus

learned helplessness, 365

Ledray, Linda, 125, 261, 304

legal proceedings

    accuracy of memories in, 244

    DNA, 152–155, 155f

    and effectiveness of SANE programs, 481

    legislation against human trafficking, 385–386, 386t, 387t–388t, 388t

    in military, 296–298, 297t

    role of prosecutor and defense attorney, 152, 154, 159

    state legislation against human trafficking, 385–387, 387t–388t, 389

Lehigh University, 313

lesbians

    crisis referral centers for, 189

    and IPV, 370

    sexual assault of, 245

    Web site for, 190t

libido (sex drive), 48

licensure, accreditation, certification, and education. *See* LACE

lichen sclerosus, 20, 21f

ligature strangulation, 513

limbic system, 239, 241

lingual (palatal) of tooth, 56

lips, 54

Lisak, David, 310

literature, rape as common theme in, 2, 10

Local DNA Index System (LDIS), 155

Locard, Edmond, 133

Locard exchange principle, 133

locus coeruleus (LC), 238f, 239

Lou Gehrig’s disease (ALS), 448

lubrication, 87–88

luminol, 135, 135f

## M

*Macbeth* (Shakespeare), 11

major contributor of biological evidence, 134

major depressive disorder (MDD), 213

major depressive episode (MDE), 213

male anal anatomy, 50, 50f–53f, 52–54

- male genital anatomy, 45, 45f–46f, 47–49, 48f–49f
- male sexual assault victims
- anogenital trauma 109–117, 109f–110f, 113f, 116t, 118t, 119
  - assault characteristics, 182–183
  - barriers to reporting, 9, 181–182
  - care and support for, 189–190, 190t
  - characteristics of victims, 182
  - evidence collection for, 120, 188, 188t
  - and gender differences, 221–223
  - gender preference for examiner, 5, 107
  - medical forensic examination, 183, 184t, 185f–187f, 188, 188t
  - military veterans, 222
  - nongenital injuries, 107–109
  - statistics, 64, 65, 66, 181
- MaleSurvivor Web site, 190t
- Maloney, Carolyn, 4, 6
- manual strangulation, 78, 495–496, 498, 511f, 513
- marital rape, 361, 365, 369. *See also* intimate partner violence (IPV) and rape
- Marullo, Geri, 6
- Maslow, Abraham, 398
- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Adapted to Trafficking Survivors, 397f, 397t
- Massachusetts Medical Society, 366
- Mathias, Charles, 3–4
- McClain, KC, 301
- MDD. *See* major depressive disorder
- MDE. *See* major depressive episode
- MDT. *See* multidisciplinary team
- median raphe, 46f, 49, 49f
- medical/radiographic evaluation of strangulation, 514–515
- Medical Society for the Study of Venereal Diseases, 103
- Megan Rondini Act of 2017, 4
- memorandum of understanding (MOU), 303, 389
- memories
- effect of acute stress response on, 243–245
  - effect of alcohol upon, 344, 345t
  - loss of, in elder abuse, 444
  - and neurobiology of trauma, 65, 239
- Memphis Police Department, 260–261
- Memphis Sexual Assault Resource Center, 260, 264
- Memphis/Shelby District Attorney General, Office of the, 260
- menstrual cycle, 41, 245
- mesial of tooth, 56
- methodological issues, 223
- microscopy, 148
- military units
- definitions of rape and sexual assault in, 298–299
  - depression among male veterans, 222
  - evolution of sexual assault policy, 300–301, 301t, 302t, 302–304
  - implementing SART teams for, 6
  - legal system in, 296–298, 297t, 300t
  - overview of, 295–296
  - participation in CODIS system, 155
  - sexual assault training, 304–305
  - statistics, 305, 305t
- Minnesota
- cost of and care of victims in, 220, 261–263
  - nursing school, 5
  - Sexual Assault Resource Service (SARS), 221
- Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) Laboratory, 105–106, 480
- Minnesota Supreme Court, 105
- minor contributor of biological evidence, 134
- mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA), 134, 147, 151, 155, 158
- mixed sexual homicide, 472f, 472–273
- molars, 56
- mons pubis, 19f, 19–20, 21f, 44f
- motor vehicle use, effect of alcohol on, 344
- MOU. *See* memorandum of understanding
- mounting injury, 82
- Mount Royale College, Canada, 268
- mouth
- anatomy of, 54, 54f, 56
  - injuries to, 75, 78f, 82, 83f
- mtDNA. *See* mitochondrial DNA
- multidisciplinary team (MDT), 194, 281, 484
- music therapy, 447

## N

- NAATs. *See* nucleic acid amplifications tests
- National Alliance to End Sexual Violence Web site, 190t

- National Center for PTSD Web site, 190t
- National Center for Victims of Crime Web site, 190t
- National Clinician's Post-Exposure Prophylaxis Hotline (PEP Line), 175
- National Comorbidity Survey, 218
- National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 124
- National Defense Authorization Act 2014 (NDAA), 304
- National DNA Index System (NDIS), 156
- National Domestic Violence Hotline, 368, 372t
- National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Web site, 190t
- National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NHAMCS), 176
- National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), 459
- National Institute of Mental Health, National Center for the Prevention and Control of Rape, 4, 261, 429
- National Prison Rape Elimination Commission (NPREC), 183
- National Protocol for Sexual Assault Medical Forensic Examinations: Adults and Adolescents* (USDOJ), 7–8
- National Research Council, Panel on Research on Violence Against Women, 4
- National Sexual Violence Resource Center, 181, 190t
- National Violence Against Women Survey, 218, 221, 309
- National Women's Study, 162, 217
- natural family planning, 44
- naval piercing, 22f
- Navy, US, 296, 300, 303. *See also* military units
- Navy Nurse Corps, US, 295, 304. *See also* military units
- NDAA. *See* National Defense Authorization Act 2014
- NDIS. *See* National DNA Index System
- neck
- anatomy, 496f, 496–497
  - carotid artery, 497
  - carotid artery ganglion, 497
  - hyoid bone, 497–498
  - jugular veins, 498
  - larynx, 498
    - cricoid cartilage, 498
    - epiglottis, 498
    - thyrohyoid membrane, 498
    - thyroid cartilage, 498
    - vocal cords, 499
  - trachea, 499
- injuries, 75f–76f, 78, 79f–80f, 83f, 84, 108, 374f, 441, 441f, 513
- negative evidence, 156
- Neisseria gonorrhoeae*, 161, 162t, 164
- neurobiology of traumatic stress responses
- acute stress reactions, 238–245
  - acute trauma and memory, 243–245
  - dissociation, 243
  - freezing response, 242
  - threat appraisal, 238–241, 238f, 239f, 240f, 241t
  - tonic immobility, 242f, 242–243
- biological model of stress, 237–238
- chronic stress response, 245–246
- chronic stress and recurring victimization, 245–246
  - genomic alterations, 246
  - neurological alterations, 246
  - psychological and physiological alterations, 245
- clinical implications, 246–247, 247t–249t, 250–251
- New Jersey Campus Sexual Assault Victims' Bill of Rights, 312, 323–324
- New Mexico Health Sciences Center, 483
- New York Rape Speak-Out, 2
- NGO. *See* nongovernmental organization
- NHAMCS. *See* National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey
- NIBRS. *See* National Incident-Based Reporting System
- 96 hour time frame
- for evidence collection and examination, 8, 104, 105, 117, 119
- nonforensic examination components
- crisis intervention and counseling, 124–125
  - pregnancy, 123–124
  - sexually transmitted infections, 122–123
- nongenital injuries, 107–109
- nongovernmental organization (NGO), 389

- nonoccupational postexposure prophylaxis.  
*See* HIV nPEP
- norepinephrine, 239–240, 241t
- North American Nursing Diagnosis Association, 10
- North Dakota protocols on suspect examinations, 198
- novel psychoactive substances (NPS), 334
- NPREC. *See* National Prison Rape Elimination Commission
- NR3C1*, glucocorticoid receptor gene, 246
- nuclear STR amplification, 105–106
- nucleic acid amplification tests (NAATs), 164
- Nurse Practice Act, 6, 198
- Nursing Home Data Compendium 2015 (CMS), 428
- nursing homes  
 staff in, 450–451  
 victimization in, 428–429
- Nursing's Social Policy Statement*, 266t, 274
- Nursology Web site, 92
- O**
- object of penetration, 88
- obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), 214, 215, 245, 347
- offender hit, 156
- offender index, 155
- offenders  
 acquaintance rapist, 310  
 condom use by, 107  
 disorganized, 469–471, 471f–472f  
 defining characteristics, 469–471  
 in elder female sexual homicide, 474  
 exit strategies, 70, 70f  
 female sexual, 181  
 and injuries inflicted on victim, 88  
 methods of approach of, 66–67  
 motivational intent of, 69  
 organized, 467–469, 469f  
 defining characteristics, 467–469  
 sexual dysfunction of, 88
- Office of Civil Rights, 315
- Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Instruction (OPNAVINST), 303
- Office of the Vice President, 14
- Office of Violence Against Women (OVW), 14
- Ogestrel, 251
- 120 hour time frame  
 for emergency contraception, 175  
 for evidence collection, 8, 104, 105, 119, 286, 335
- online genealogy databases, 151
- online learning and courses, 269, 274
- Operation Matisse, 333
- opiates and fentanyl analogs, 350t, 350–351
- OPNAVINST. *See* Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Instruction
- Oppenheim, Hermann, 11
- oral anatomy, 54, 54f–55f, 56, 57f, 58
- oral contraceptives, 245, 251
- oral sex  
 adolescents' view of, 58  
 forced, 82, 83f, 183, 185f
- orchiopexy, 48
- oropharynx, 54f, 56
- orthopedic injuries, 443
- Ortiz, Michelle, 305
- ovaries, 44
- oviducts (fallopian tubes), 39, 44, 48
- OVW. *See* Office of Violence Against Women
- oxytocin, 241t
- P**
- pain  
 during adolescence, 33  
 HERS to evaluate, 29–30, 30t  
 offenders, and sexual fantasy, 69  
 after sexual assault, 245  
 perception of, in elder abuse, 444  
*See also* forensic examination
- palatal (lingual) of tooth, 56
- palate, 56
- papillae, 56
- paraurethral ductal openings (Skene's glands), 25
- partner rape, 361  
 prevalence, 362–364
- patient, defined, 14
- PCR. *See* polymerase chain reaction
- PE. *See* prolonged exposure

- pectinate (dentate) line, 52, 52f
- pelvic anatomy, normal female, 24f, 53f
- pelvic examinations, and STI prophylaxis, 167
- penetration, 88
- penile cancer, 47
- penile shaft, 47
- penis, 45, 46f, 47–49, 48f–49f
- Pennsylvania Injury Classification System (PICS), 115–116
- PEP. *See* postexposure prophylaxis
- perianal skin folds, 50, 50f
- perineum, 19f, 44, 45f, 71, 71f
- petechial hemorrhages, 56, 57f, 77, 78f, 512–513
- PFC. *See* prefrontal cortex
- Philadelphia Geriatric Center, 429
- phosphoglucomutase (PGM) typing, 148
- photodocumentation
  - to document injury, 58, 90–91, 91f, 92, 92t, 109–110
  - of nongenital injuries, 108–109
  - in IPV, 367
  - in strangulation, 500–502, 500f–511f, 505, 507–511
  - in suspect forensic examination, 195
- physicians
  - forensic effectiveness, 480
  - lack of skills for treatment of rape, 259
  - reluctance to do rape examination, 5
- PICS. *See* Pennsylvania Injury Classification System
- Plan B, 123, 175t, 176
- pneumonitis, 513
- pocket cards with safety information, 369
- Poe, Ted, 4, 6
- Poe Maloney Act, 6
- poetry, rape as common theme in, 2
- police departments, 2, 14. *See also* law enforcement personnel
- polymerase chain reaction (PCR), 148–151, 149f–150f
- positional asphyxia (postural asphyxia), 513
- postanoxic encephalopathy, 513
- postassault prophylaxis
  - emergency contraception, 123, 161, 162, 175t, 175–176, 251
  - epidemiology, 161–162, 162t, 164
  - HIV nPEP, 172–175, 174f
  - statistics, 176–177
  - STI and pregnancy testing, 164–167
  - STI prophylaxis, 168t
    - Chlamydia*, 167
    - gonorrhea, 167
    - hepatitis B, 169
    - human papillomavirus (HPV), 169–171
    - Trichomonas* and bacterial vaginosis, 168
- posterior commissure. *See* posterior fourchette
- posterior fornix, 40
- posterior fourchette, 20, 39, 39f, 82, 87, 113f
- postexposure prophylaxis (PEP), 122, 189, 489t
- posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
  - American Psychiatric Association recognizes, 10, 11
  - among human trafficking victims, 391, 399–401, 404, 406–407, 414
  - vs.* anxiety, 214–215
  - DSM-III diagnostic criteria, 11
  - DSM-IV diagnostic criteria, 13
  - DSM-5 diagnostic criteria, 11–13, 95, 209, 211, 237–238, 401
  - and eating disordered behavior, 219
  - effect of genomic alterations on, 246
  - effect of oral contraceptives on, 245
  - and gender differences, 221–222
  - history of diagnosis, 11–13
  - in literature, 10
  - and neurological alterations, 239, 246
  - psychological and physiological alterations, 245
  - as umbrella term, 10
  - use of CSAAT for, 92, 95
  - on victim impact and recovery, 211–212
  - Web site, 190t
- power, as motivation of offender, 69
- PREA. *See* Prison Rape Elimination Act
- prefrontal cortex (PFC), 239f, 239–242
- pregnancy
  - and DNA testing, 134
  - effect of estrogen on, 27, 29
  - testing for preexisting, 164, 167
  - See also* emergency contraception (EC)
- premature ejaculation, 49

prepuce. *See* clitoral hood  
 presence of offender and victim control, 67  
 Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), 183  
 product rule, 146, 152  
 progesterone, 44, 175  
 prolonged exposure (PE), 407  
 prosecutors  
   collaboration with SANEs, 260–261  
   discovery of evidence, 154  
   of elder sexual abuse, 452  
   prosecutor's fallacy, 152  
   and statute of limitations, 159  
   as part of SART team, 285  
 prostate gland, 49  
 prostitution, 70, 70f, 362t, 395–396  
*Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish  
 Trafficking in Persons, Especially  
 Women and Children*, 385  
 psychiatric consult, 189  
 psychological trauma  
   history of, 10–13  
 psychoneuroimmunology, 245  
 PTSD. *See* posttraumatic stress disorder  
 puberty, 19, 25, 26, 29t, 45, 48–49, 69, 87  
 Public Health Service Act 1970, Title X, 260  
 pulmonary edema, 513  
 pulp, 56

## Q

quiescence, 243

## R

RADAR algorithm, 366, 371  
 “railway spine,” 11  
 RAM. *See* Roy's Adaptation Model  
 random match probability, 152  
 rape and rapists  
   cost of, 219–220  
   defined, 181, 223, 298–299  
   forcible *vs.* incapacitated, 69  
   frequently known to victim, 63, 65  
   and IPV, 361–364  
   legal reform, 3–4  
   reporting, 181–182, 303–304, 334–335, 363t

  stereotypes regarding, 8–9  
   terminology, 13–14  
 rape crisis centers, 2–3  
 rape kits, 142, 143f  
   “Jane Doe kits,” 141  
   lack of standardization, 199  
   suspect-specific, 194  
   Vitullo, 259  
 rape trauma syndrome (RTS), 2, 9–10, 209–210,  
   260, 446  
 reaction of victims, 69–70  
 recantation of sexual abuse, 432–433  
*Recovering From Rape* (Ledray), 125  
 rectal prolapse (rectocele), 52–53, 53f, 54  
 rectum, 24f, 52f, 52–54, 53f, 113  
 redundant hymen, 31f, 32  
 registered nurses (RNs)  
   limited knowledge of rape, 259  
   SANEs as, 284  
   training for assaults in military, 304–305  
 religion  
   and emergency contraception, 124, 176  
   and human trafficking, 391  
 resiliency, 220  
 resource loss, 219–220  
 restraint bruising, 78  
 retrograde ejaculation, 49  
 RN. *See* registered nurses  
 Robinson, Lovette, 304  
 Roche Pharmaceuticals, 333  
 Rohypnol, 119, 310, 333, 340t, 347, 348t  
 Rosenthal, Lynn, 14  
 Roy's Adaptation Model (RAM), 92, 93t–94t  
 RTS. *See* rape trauma syndrome  
 rugae, 50  
 Rumsfeld, Donald, 300  
 runaways, 70, 70f  
 Rust, Edith, 263

## S

SAFE. *See* sexual assault forensic examiner  
 SAFE TA. *See* Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner  
   Technical Assistance Project  
 saliva, 56, 88, 134, 136, 147, 437  
 salivary glands, 56, 58, 496

- sanctuary trauma, 182
- SANE. *See* sexual assault nurse examiner
- SANE Program Development and Operation Guide*, 6, 8, 198, 262, 271–272
- SANE Program Evaluation Questionnaire (SPEQ), 272, 486t–487t
- SAPR. *See* Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program
- SARC. *See* Sexual Assault Resource Center; sexual assault response coordinator
- SARS. *See* Sexual Assault Resource Service
- SART. *See* sexual assault response team
- SASS. *See* Sexual Assault Symptoms Scale
- SAVI. *See* Sexual Assault Victim Intervention program
- scholarship in peer-reviewed publications, 273
- scrotum, 45, 46f, 47, 48f, 49, 120, 184t, 196
- SDIS. *See* State DNA Index System
- Second Opinion software, 275
- self-care for human trafficking victims, 415
- Selye, Hans, 237
- semen and seminal fluid, 107, 133, 136, 147–148
- seminal vesicles, 48–49
- separation from partner, and IPV, 365
- septate hymens, 31f, 33
- 72 hour time frame
  - and detection of injuries 64, 89, 111
  - and DFSA, 352
  - discharge instructions in strangulation, 512
  - and elder sexual abuse, 443
  - and emergency contraception, 123, 164, 175, 368
  - for evidence collection, 104–106
  - in IPV treatment, 368
  - and postexposure prophylaxis, 122
  - risk assessment for HIV nPEP, 173, 174f
- sex drive (libido), 48
- sexual assault
  - body injury, 63–64
    - anogenital trauma, 109–112, 109f–110f
    - mechanisms and types of, 71–81, 71f–81f, 73t
    - nongenital injuries, 107–109
    - research on, 64–65
    - sites of, 82–86, 82f–86f
    - treatment and documentation, 89–92, 91f, 92t
  - on college campus, 309–329
  - drug-facilitated, 333–354
    - challenges in investigation, 334–336
    - drugs used, 343–354
  - elder victims, 426–427, 429, 432–433
    - injuries, 438–444, 439f–442f, 444f
  - examination components, 103–125, 410
    - DNA evidence, 105–107, 133–159, 135f, 138f, 140f, 143f, 144f–145f, 149f, 151f
    - documentation, 120–122
    - forensic evidence, 104–105, 119–120
    - nonforensic components, 122–125
  - impact and recovery, 209–226
    - acute stress disorder, 211
    - acute stress reactions, 238–245, 238f–240f, 241t, 242f
    - anxiety, 214–215
    - chronic stress response, 245–246
    - depression, 213–214
    - health problems, 216–217
    - immediate reactions, 209–211
    - other effects, 218–221
    - posttraumatic stress disorder, 211–213
    - social adjustment, 215–216
    - substance abuse, 217–218
  - male victims, 181–190
    - assault characteristics, 182–183
    - barriers to reporting, 181–182
    - care and support, 189–190, 190t
    - characteristics of victims, 182
    - forensic examination, 183, 184t, 185f–187f, 188, 188t
    - gender differences, 221–223
  - military response, 295–306
  - psychological impact of, 8–10
  - terminology used in, 13–14, 298–299
- sexual assault forensic examiner (SAFE)
  - and crisis intervention and counseling, 124–125
  - examination, evidence collection, and documentation, 103, 104, 106–108, 110, 120–121, 134–136, 139, 142, 193, 199
  - role of, 6–8, 154, 156, 284–285
  - vs.* SANE, 14–15



- and STI prophylactic care, 123  
*Suspect/Perpetrator Evidence Collection Protocol*, 194  
 typical program operation, 7  
 use of VAGIS, 117
- Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Technical Assistance Project (SAFE TA), 288
- sexual assault kits, 142, 143f  
 “Jane Doe,” 141  
 lack of standardization, 199  
 Vitullo, 259
- sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE)  
 personnel  
   advancement of nurse to SANE, 15  
   for assaults in military, 304–305  
   assessing victims’ behaviors, 225  
   and chain of evidence issues, 120  
   Comprehensive Sexual Assault Assessment Tool (CSAAT) for, 92, 93t–94t, 94–95  
   documenting debris collection, 120–121  
   education for and qualification of, 259–276, 267t  
     continuing education, 269–270  
     future of, 273–275  
     what is included, 265–268  
   and emergency contraception, 124  
   and HIV/STD prophylactic care, 122–123, 177  
   and law enforcement role distinction, 285  
   as positive liaison, 210  
   protocols on suspect examination, 198  
   providing crisis intervention and counseling, 124–125  
   role in sexual homicide, 464  
   role in examination and documentation, 7–8, 104–106, 108, 110, 120–121  
   role of and need for, 6–7, 198, 250, 284  
   role *vs.* advocate, 284–285
- programs  
   and depression among male victims, 222  
   and development of CSAAT, 92  
   differences on terms, SANE *vs.* SAFE, 14–15  
   educational programs, 265–276, 266t, 271t  
   evaluating, 8, 479–484, 485t, 486–487, 487t–490t, 490  
   history of and need for, 4–6, 250  
   implementation of, 1–2  
   Program Evaluation Questionnaire (SPEQ), 272, 486–487, 487t  
   role of, 6–8  
   *Suspect/Perpetrator Evidence Collection Protocol*, 194  
   typical program operation, 7  
   *See also* SAFE; SART
- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Educational Guidelines* (IAFN), 265–266
- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Scope and Standards of Practice*, 265
- Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SARC), 301
- Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program (SAPR), 304
- sexual assault resource center (SARC), 64, 261
- Sexual Assault Resource Service (SARS), 5, 221
- sexual assault response coordinator (SARC), 287, 302–303
- Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)  
   for campus assaults, 313, 315, 321  
   collaboration with SAFE and SANE, 7, 289–290  
   composition of team, 103, 108, 194, 262, 281–285, 282t, 287, 288, 288t  
   defined, 15  
   history and need for, 4–6  
   for military, 6, 302  
   in obtaining biological evidence, 138–141, 159  
   operation and roles, 282t, 282–284  
   operation models, 286–287  
   program impact, 289–290  
   publications, 263, 265, 273  
   in sexual homicide, 464  
   in suspect examination, 194  
   in victim treatment, 225
- Sexual Assault Symptoms Scale (SASS), 210
- Sexual Assault Victim Intervention (SAVI) program, 303
- sexual dysfunction, 69, 88, 157, 219
- sexual experience, prior, 87–88
- sexual homicide  
   case study, 462, 463f, 473  
   crime classification in, 464, 466

- disorganized offenders, 469–471, 471f–472f
  - common forensic findings, 470–471
  - frequently noted crime scene indicators, 470
  - staging, 470
  - victimology, 469–470
- elder female, 473–475, 475f
  - frequently noted crime scene indicators, 474–475
  - offenders, 474
  - victimology, 473–474
- forensic autopsy, 463–464
- forensic evidence, 464, 465f
- measuring injury severity in, 459–463, 460t, 462t, 462t, 463f
- mixed sexual homicide, 472f, 472–473
- organized offenders, 467–469, 469f
  - common forensic findings, 469
  - frequently noted crime scene indicators, 467–468
  - staging, 468
  - victimology, 467
- sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
  - among human trafficking victims, 382, 399
  - “back door approach” to services, 317
  - in child sexual assaults, 195
  - in elder sexual abuse, 434–435
  - and IPV, 368
  - and length of foreskin, 47
  - postassault prophylaxis, 167, 168t, 169, 171–175
    - epidemiology, 161–162, 162t, 164
  - prevalence following sexual assault, 162t
  - prophylaxis for male victims, 189
  - role of SANE programs in preventing, 1, 6
  - sexual assault examination, 122–123
  - suspect examination, 195
  - testing, 164, 167
  - through oral sex, 58
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases Treatment Guidelines, 2015* (CDC), 161, 167, 169, 489t
- sexual violence risk reduction tips, 318t–319t
- Shakespeare, 11
- shaman (natural healer), 406
- shelter programs, 189
- short tandem repeat (STR) testing, 106, 145, 148, 154, 158
- SHR. *See* Supplemental Homicide Reports
- Sigma Theta Tau International, 269, 274
- simulation labs, 274–275
- 6-step process for evaluating SANE programs, 484–487, 485t
- 60 minute time frame
  - for beginning forensic examination, 104
  - for GBH and analog absorption, 346
- Skene’s glands (paraurethral ductal openings), 25
- skin
  - color differences, 112
  - evidence found in sexual assault, 134
  - and mucous membranes, in elder abuse, 438–440, 439f
- sleep, 244
- smuggling, *vs.* human trafficking, 386, 386t
- SNS. *See* sympathetic nervous system
- social adjustment and interpersonal functioning, 215–216
- Society of Forensic Toxicologists Drug-Facilitated Crimes Committee (SOFT DFC), 335, 336
- sodomy, 299
- soft palate, 54f, 56, 57f
- “soldier’s heart,” 10, 11
- SPEQ. *See* SANE Program Evaluation Questionnaire
- spermatogenesis, 48
- spermatozoa, 49
- sphincter muscles, 50, 51f
- spinnbarkeit, 42f, 44
- spousal immunity from sexual assault laws, 361
- squamous-columnar junction, 44
- stab wounds, 81
- staging behavior, 468, 469f, 470
- State Department, US, 381
- State DNA Index System (SDIS), 155–156
- statute of limitations, 141, 159
- STIs. *See* sexually transmitted infections
- strangulation
  - fatal 78, 84
  - nonfatal
    - case study, 512
    - discharge instructions, 512
    - dynamics of sexual assault, 78, 80, 80f
    - key terms, 512–513

medical/radiographic evaluation, 514–515  
 neck anatomy, 496f, 496–499  
 photodocumentation protocol, 500–502,  
 500f–511f, 505, 507–511  
 signs and symptoms of, 499, 499t  
 as type of asphyxiation, 495  
 stress, biological model of, 237–238, 238f  
 stress-induced analgnesia, 241  
*Studies on Hysteria* (Freud), 11  
 subconscious, 11  
 substance abuse, 67, 69, 217–218, 223  
 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services  
 Administration, 321–322  
 suicide, 189, 213–214, 223  
 summative evaluation of SANE programs,  
 270–271, 271t  
 Supplemental Homicide Reports (SHR), 459  
 Supreme Court, US, 286  
 surprise approach to victim, 66–67  
 survivors, defined, 14  
 suspect documentation form, 198, 200–204  
 suspect forensic examination, 193–198,  
 195f–197f, 205–206  
   barriers to, 199  
   case study, 198–199  
   legal issues, 199  
   protocols, 198–199, 205t–206t  
 swabs and swabbing  
   for adult male victims, 65, 188t  
   of anal orifice, 50, 53f  
   of bite marks, 75, 75f–76f, 79f  
   of bruises, 74f  
   buccal, 158, 194, 196  
     *vs.* oral, 136  
   for chest injuries, 84f  
   in DNA evidence collection, 106–107, 137,  
     138f, 140, 148–149  
   in oral injuries, 83f  
   of piercing and studs, 56, 57f  
   of scrotum, 47, 48f  
   in suspect forensic examination, 194,  
     195–196, 197f, 198  
   of teeth, 58  
 sympathetic nervous system (SNS), 237  
 syphilis, 161–162, 162t, 164, 164f, 166f

## T

Tailhook scandal, 300  
 TB. *See* toluidine blue dye  
 TEARS (types of injury), 73t, 89, 112, 445  
 teeth, 56  
*Telehealth Resource Guide*, 275  
 testes, 47–48, 48f  
 testimonial evidence, 142  
 testosterone, 48  
 tetanus, 198  
 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), 342t, 349–350  
 TF-CBT. *See* trauma-focused cognitive behavioral  
   therapy  
 THC. *See* tetrahydrocannabinol  
 theater, rape as common theme in, 2  
 Theta correction, 152  
 30 minute time frame  
   for beginning of forensic examination, 104  
   for GBH and analog absorption, 346  
 Thompson, Stephen M., 310  
 threats  
   appraisal of, 238–241, 239f–240f, 241t  
   to control victims, 67  
   as offender exit strategy, 70  
 thrivers, defined, 14  
 thyrohyoid membrane, 498  
 thyroid cartilage, 496f, 498  
 Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972,  
   314–315  
 toluidine blue dye (TB), 88, 110f, 110–111  
 Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, 147  
 tongue, 54f, 56, 57f  
 tonic immobility, 242f, 242–243  
   *vs.* dissociation, 243  
   Tonic Immobility Scale, 243  
 tonsils, 54  
 trachea, 496f, 499, 513  
 trafficker-victim dynamics, 389–392, 393f  
*Trafficking in Persons Report* (US State  
   Department), 381–382  
 Trafficking Victim Protection Act (TVPA),  
   385–386, 398  
 transportation accidents, 10–11

trauma

- anogenital, 109–117, 109f–110f, 113f, 116t, 118t, 119
  - in consensual *vs.* nonconsensual sex, 111
  - detection methods, 109–111, 109f–110f
  - injury frequency, 113
  - injury location, 112–113, 113f
  - injury patterns, 112
  - injury prevalence, 117, 119
  - injury severity, 113–117, 116t, 118t
  - injury types, 112
  - skin color differences, 111
- blunt force, 72–73, 72f, 77, 80
- in elder abuse, 439–440, 446
- in human trafficking, 404–405
- masquerading as accidental bruising, 430–431
- past, and effect upon patient behavior, 250
- trauma-informed care principles, 247t–249t, 414–415
  - cultural competency, 414–415
  - self-care, 415
- trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy (TF-CBT), 226, 407
- traumatic hysteria, 11
- Triazolam (Halcion), 340t, 347, 348t
- Trichomonas vaginalis*, 161–162, 162t, 164, 167, 168t, 169, 169f
- tricyclic antidepressants, 353
- TVPA. *See* Trafficking Victim Protection Act
- 24 hour time frame
  - in DFSA, 333, 335
  - emergency contraception, 123, 175
  - in evidence collection, 105, 136, 440
  - in strangulation, 512

U

- ultraviolet (UV) light, 109, 111, 136
- Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), 296, 297t
- Uniform Crime Report (UCR). *See* Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- United Nations
  - Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, 385
  - General Assembly, 385

- on human trafficking, 399
  - and HIV, 409

- Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 381
- University of Alabama, Birmingham School of Nursing, 269
- University of Central Florida, 106
- University of Minnesota School of Nursing, 5
- University of Tennessee, 260, 264, 268
- UNODC. *See* United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
- urethral ligaments, 22, 23f
- urethral meatus, 22–23, 23f, 46f, 47
- urethral prolapse, 23, 23f, 25
- urethrocele, 23, 24f
- urine specimens, 119, 120, 196, 333, 335, 336t–343t
- Utah
  - Department of Health, 220
  - use of software for telemedicine, 275
- uterus, 24f, 40
- UV. *See* ultraviolet light
- uvula, 54f, 56, 185f

V

- vaccination, 162, 169, 171
- vagina, 20, 39, 86–87
- vaginal introitus, 19f, 39, 113f
- vaginal rugae, 40
- vaginal vault, 26
- VAGIS. *See* Vulvar Acute Genital Injury Scale
- Valium (Diazepam), 340t, 347, 348t
- vasa deferentia, 48
- vasectomy, 48, 107
- VAWA. *See* Violence Against Women Act 1994; Reauthorization Act of 2013
- venereal disease. *See* sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- vestibular bands, 22, 23f, 37f
- vestibule, 20, 26f
- victims and victimization
  - beliefs of victim complicity, 260
  - defined, 14
  - of disorganized offenders, 469–470
  - dynamics of, 65–67, 68f, 68t, 69–70

- control of victim, 67–69, 68f, 68t  
 methods of approach, 66–67  
 reaction of victim, 69–70  
 and human trafficking, 383, 392, 394,  
 394t–395t  
 in nursing homes, 428–429  
 recovery from sexual assault, 209–226  
 acute stress disorder, 211  
 anxiety, 214–215  
 depression, 213–214  
 health problems, 216–217  
 male victims and gender differences, 221–223  
 other effects, 218–220  
 posttraumatic stress disorder, 211–212  
 social adjustment and interpersonal  
 functioning, 215–216  
 substance abuse, 217–218  
 recurring, 245–246  
 in sexual homicide, 467, 473–474  
 transitioning elders from victims to survivors,  
 446–449  
 group counseling, 447  
 individual counseling, 446–447  
 music therapy, 447  
 rape trauma symptoms, 446  
 video-based interventions, 251  
 Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), 4  
 Reauthorization Act of 2013, 286, 314  
 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act  
 (1994), 4  
 Vitullo kit, 259  
 vocal cords, 499  
 vulva, 20  
 Vulvar Acute Genital Injury Scale (VAGIS),  
 117, 118t  
 vulvar cancer, 20
- W**
- war, rape in, 2  
 weapons  
 in sexual homicide, 459, 467, 470,  
 472–473, 474  
 used in male sexual assault, 183  
 and victim control, 67, 68f
- White House Advisor on Violence Against  
 Women, 14  
 WHO. *See* World Health Organization  
 Wigmore, John Henry, 3  
 wisdom teeth, 56  
 Wood's lamp, 84f, 107, 136  
 World Health Organization (WHO), 347, 409  
 wounds  
 cut and stab, 80–81, 81f, 408  
 defensive, 84, 470  
 in elders, 439
- X**
- Xanax (Alprazolam), 340t, 347, 348t
- Y**
- Y-STR testing, 106, 146–147, 151, 155  
 Yuzpe regimen emergency contraception, 123
- Z**
- “Z” drugs, 352–353