

WEST MICHIGAN REGIONAL PROTOCOL

SEXUAL ASSAULT (ALLEGED) PROTOCOL

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Purpose: To provide the process for evaluation and management of situations involving alleged sexual assault.

M B S P

I. Assessment and Management Information

- A. Evaluate scene and preserve evidence.
- B. Documentation of assessment information is essential.
- C. Assure appropriate police agency has been notified.
- D. Use sensitivity in asking victim for historical information.
 - 1. Avoid unnecessary probing into specific events.
- E. A gentle careful survey for injuries after explaining procedure to victim.
 - 1. If assessment is refused and there is no reason to suspect serious injuries, it is better to forego the exam rather than subject victim to another encounter against her/his will.
 - 2. Refer to appropriate treatment protocols as indicated.
- F. Transport

CONTACT MEDICAL CONTROL

B S P

G. Possible orders post radio contact:

- 1. If transport is refused,
 - a. Refer patient to Rape Crisis Center and police
 - b. Refer to hospital if desires care on own; if so, ensure that police are on scene.

M B S P

II. Documentation and Evidence Preservation

- A. Written documentation should include bruises, red marks, cuts, scratches or other evidence of trauma.

III. Special Considerations

- A. Questioning of victim by EMS personnel on non-medical topics is discouraged.
- B. The investigation of the circumstances surrounding the incident is the responsibility of the law enforcement agency.
- C. Red marks may disappear and your documentation may be the only witness that the victim was choked or struck, even though he/she stated it.
- D. Be alert for torn clothing, fragments of cloth, blood, or body fluids, etc. for they need to be preserved as evidence. Police are responsible for the disposition of this evidence.
- E. Sensitivity to the psychological state of the patient at this time is critical.
 - 1. Symptoms of psychological trauma include:
 - a. Crying, or hysteria
 - b. Inappropriate behavior such as laughing or constant small-talk
 - c. Irrational depression, i.e., withdrawal, non-communicative state, comments suggestive of self-accusation or guilt
- F. Psychological Support
 - 1. Be supportive and consoling.
 - 2. Be non-judgmental.
 - a. Do not reinforce feelings of guilt.
 - b. Do not reinforce victim's lack of self-esteem.
 - 3. Speak softly.
 - 4. Answer questions directly, but simply.
 - 5. Explain all that takes place, both prehospital and in hospital.

