



# Bridging the Gap Between Healthcare and Law Enforcement in the Field of Forensics

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## Purpose

Determine the root cause of poor collaboration and communication between professionals. Evaluate the integration and evolution of forensic nursing into the criminal justice system as well as current issues preventing proper networking and collaboration. Review literature to determine best evidence-based practice as well as suggestion for practice change. Conclude best suggestions for practice change to initiate teamwork between law enforcement and forensic nursing .

## Background

The evolution of field of forensic nursing has led to the integration of nursing into new multidisciplinary fields, one being the criminal justice system. With the release of the American Nurses Association's (ANA) "Forensic Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice" in 2017 and the previous establishment of the International Association of Forensic Nurses in 1992, expansion in the field continues to grow. Currently, nurses in work inpatient and in the community. Nurses can serve as Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE), death investigators, coroners, legal nurse consultants, and expert witnesses or witnesses. in the US, each state dictates to what capacity the nurse can serve. Collectively, forensic nurses can serve in federal, state, and local positions.

## Methods & Framework

A thorough review of peer reviewed articles that evaluated various subjects within the topic were reviewed. Research is scarce which suggests further investigation into this topic is warranted moving forward. A synthesis of information concluded on a suggestion for practice change. The ANA's scope and standards for practice for forensic nursing as well as Hammer, Moynihan, and Oagliaro's Forensics' Handbook for Practice were evaluated alongside the peer reviewed articles.

## Outcomes

- Better understanding of the practice change needed as the field of forensic nursing continues to evolve.
- Integration into new multidisciplinary fields requires the need for undated framework in which to build upon in order to prevent collaboration issues and ethical and moral dilemmas both with the nurse and members of other disciplines.
- Further research into the topic will be required moving forward as forensic nursing grows as a field.
- While evidence a points to the need for proper framework, the evidence is scarce and calls for further investigation moving forward.

## Relevance to Forensic Nursing Specialty

Forensic nursing is an ever growing and evolving profession. Scope and standards define practice expectations but must grow and evolve with the profession. Integration into new environments calls for mutual adaptation. Knowledge of roles, expectations, and limitations will aid in the improve of collaboration and communication as well as improve overall outcome. This includes noting the limitations given by the state of practice. Needed for all aspects of nursing practice and has been done before with older specialties. Nurses are taught to collaborate and communicate.

## Conclusions

Forensic nursing is on course to continue to evolve as the field of forensics will as well. With evolution, the forensic nursing role will integrate into new environments and professions not previously held by nursing before. A key profession is the criminal justice system. Research shows the lack of framework for the nurse while learning to adapt to new roles causes ethical and moral dilemmas. While a scope and standards for the forensic nurse exists a proper framework that is appropriate for the forensic role is needed. Much needed framework will aid in better role differentiation between the multidisciplinary teams, improve collaboration and networking, explain expectations, and improve teamwork.

Campbell, Greeson, & Patterson, 2011	IRB approved interviews of SANE nurses and their relationship with law enforcement	
Drake, tabor, Hamilton, & Cannon, 2020	Nurses in death investigation and medicolegal professions	
Loucks, 2013	Nurses as educators of law enforcement personnel	
Pasqualone, 2015	Emergency room nurses and their relationship working alongside law enforcement personnel	
Dobratz, 2008	Ethical and moral dilemmas faced in nursing as it evolves and integrates into new fields within the community	
Brous, 2007	How nurses' scope, in particular HIPAA can be upheld while working with law enforcement	
Dimmit & Artnak, 1994	Evaluation of moral and ethical dilemmas in expanded nursing roles	
Philips & Harris, 2017	The "Roy Adaptation Model" was used as the conceptual framework basis for this study	
Valentine, Sekula, & Lynch, 2020	Forensic nursing theory. Introduction of the constructed theory of forensic nursing	

