

Forensic nursing education

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Section Editor

Forensic nursing is emerging as an entity in the Canadian health care system and this column has highlighted several articles on forensic nursing in the past with emphasis on some of the roles of the forensic nurse such as sexual assault nurse examiner and death investigator, and the implications of forensic aspects of health care in the emergency department.

This column will provide a brief overview of educational opportunities in Canada for those nurses wanting to enter into the realm of forensic nursing/forensic health care.

One only has to do a “google search” to discover that educational opportunities in forensic nursing in Canada are extremely limited. This is even after decades of registered nurses working in such areas as sexual assault care, child abuse/maltreatment, death investigation, forensic psychiatric nursing, forensic correctional nursing and legal nurse consulting.

Mount Royal College in Calgary, Alberta, offers online courses in forensic studies – Advanced Specialty Health Studies, an 18-credit program that can be taken full- or part-time and includes the following courses:

- Forensic History, Risk Populations and Issues
- Forensic Psychiatry and Correctional Populations
- Victims of Violence
- Forensic Science
- Expert Witness Testimony
- Crime Scene Investigation and Evidence
- Sexual Assault Examination and Intervention Theory
- Sexual Assault Examination and Intervention Practicum

See website: <http://www.mtroyal.ca/healthcomm/ashs/fore/index.shtml>

British Columbia Institute of Technology in Burnaby, BC, has an Advanced Specialty Certificate in Forensic Health Care within the Centre for Forensic and Security Technology Studies that has been offered as classroom studies since January 2005.

This part-time, 30-credit study program includes the following courses:

- Criminal Law 1: Legal Procedures
- Criminal Law 2: Legal Evidence
- Science, Technology and the Law
- Forensic Interviewing 1
- Introduction to Forensic Science
- Introduction to Forensic Health Sciences
- Management of Victims of Trauma, Violence and Crime
- Wound and Blunt Force Trauma Assessment, Documentation

and Evaluation

- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Core Education – Theoretical Aspects
- Forensic Photography
- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Core Education – Practical Aspects for Health Care Professionals
- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Core Education – Practical Aspects for Non-Health Care Professionals

See website: <http://www.bcit.ca/study/programs/525hascert>

Seneca College in Toronto, Ontario, is the newest educational institution to offer courses within their Forensic Health Studies Certificate Program that requires six courses to complete. Courses offered are:

- Introduction to Forensic Health Science
- Introduction to Criminal Law: Procedures and Evidence
- Management of Victims of Trauma, Violence and Crime
- Wound and Blunt Force Trauma Assessment, Documentation and Evaluation
- Forensic Interviewing
- Science, Technology and the Law
- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Core Education – Theoretical Aspects


See website: <http://www.senecac.on.ca/healthsc/forensichealthstudies/index.htm>

Centennial College in Toronto, Ontario, offers a Forensic Mental Health Certificate with three courses required for completion. Courses are:

- Introduction to Law & Mental Health (Forensic Nursing) MNTL-418
- Advanced Law & Mental Health Nursing for RNs MNTL-419
- Law & Mental Health Nursing Practicum for RNs MNTL-420

See website: http://www.centennialcollege.ca/future/schs_ce_rn_forensic.jsp

There have been offerings of stand-alone courses in forensic nursing/forensic health care at University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, and University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK, as well.

This brief overview is meant to highlight the need for educational opportunities for the specialized body of knowledge that differentiates forensic nursing from other nursing specialties to become more readily available to nurses in Canada. 

Please send any comments/ideas/suggestions on forensic nursing to:

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