



Forensic Nursing: Bridging Healthcare and the Legal System- A Comprehensive Review

Yachana Parashar^{1*}, Raj Kumar K², Akhila C³, Kanika Singh⁴, Neha Rautela⁵

¹Associate Professor, Soni Nursing College, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

²Research Supervisor and Associate Professor, Shree Sahajanand Institute of Nursing, Bhavnagar, Gujarat, India

³Assistant Professor, Department of Child Health Nursing, Jubilee Mission College of Nursing, Madona Nagar, Jubilee Gardens, Kachery, Thrissur, Kerala, India

⁴Assistant Professor, COER College of Nursing and Paramedical Sciences, COER University, Roorkee, Uttarakhand, India

⁵Lecturer, MIET Kumaon College of Nursing, Haldwani, Uttarakhand, India

Abstract

In order to address the needs of both victims and offenders of violence, trauma, and criminal activity, forensic nursing is a developing specialization that combines healthcare and the judicial system. The idea, application, functions, and importance of forensic nursing in contemporary healthcare systems are examined in this review. It emphasizes the value of evidence gathering, documentation, and patient advocacy while highlighting the interdisciplinary cooperation between nurses, law enforcement, and legal experts. The assessment also addresses future orientations, educational requirements, and challenges, especially in developing nations like India. By providing compassionate care and upholding justice, forensic nursing strengthens the legal and medical systems.

Keywords: Forensic, Nursing, Bridging, Health.

INTRODUCTION

In situations involving violence, abuse, and trauma, healthcare and law often come together. In order to handle these intricate circumstances, forensic nursing has developed as a specialist specialty that combines nursing practice with legal principles. It is described as the use of nursing science and forensic science to treat trauma and violence victims and offenders.¹

This specialty preserves the integrity of medico-legal evidence while guaranteeing comprehensive patient treatment. The significance of forensic nursing has grown dramatically due to the rise in crime, abuse, and interpersonal violence worldwide.²

The Forensic Nursing Concept

In order to assist both patient care and legal outcomes, the field of forensic nursing integrates medical services with the criminal justice system.³ In addition to gathering

and preserving evidence for legal purposes, it entails the evaluation, diagnosis, treatment, and documentation of injuries.

Since receiving official recognition in the early 1990s, the discipline has grown to become a well-recognized nursing specialty.¹

Forensic Nursing's Scope

Emergency rooms, mental hospitals, prisons, and community healthcare settings are just a few of the places where forensic nursing is practiced.⁴

Sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, human trafficking, and mysterious deaths are just a few of the many cases it handles. The growing scope

Address for correspondence: Yachana Parashar,
Associate Professor, Soni Nursing College, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India
E-mail: parasharyachana@gmail.com

Access this article online

Quick Response Code



Website:
journal.gfnps.org

Doi: 10.00000/02.020.X

This is an open access journal, and articles are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as appropriate credit is given and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

How to cite this article: Parashar Y, Kumar RK, Akhila C, Singh K, Rautela M. Forensic Nursing: Bridging Healthcare and the Legal System- A Comprehensive Review. GFNPSS Global Nursing Journal of India. 2026;9(1):924-925.

Submitted: 19/04/2026, **Accepted:** 29/04/2025, **Published:** 30/04/2026

emphasizes how important forensic nurses are to the provision of healthcare as well as judicial proceedings.⁵

Roles and Responsibilities of Forensic Nurses

Forensic nurses perform multiple roles that bridge clinical care and legal responsibilities.

They provide direct patient care by managing physical injuries, offering psychological support, and ensuring crisis intervention.⁶ In addition, they are responsible for meticulous evidence collection, including biological samples and injury documentation, while maintaining the chain of custody.⁴

Forensic nurses also assist legal authorities by preparing medico-legal reports and providing expert testimony in court.⁷ Their role as patient advocates ensures that victims' rights are protected and that informed consent is maintained throughout the process.¹

Forensic nurses' roles and responsibilities

Numerous tasks that connect clinical treatment and legal obligations are carried out by forensic nurses. By treating physical wounds, providing psychological support, and guaranteeing crisis intervention, they give direct patient care. They are also in charge of keeping the chain of custody intact while carefully gathering evidence, such as biological samples and injury records.⁵ By creating medico-legal reports and offering expert testimony in court, forensic nurses also support legal authorities. As patient advocates, they make sure that informed consent is upheld during the procedure and that victims' rights are safeguarded.¹

Forensic Nursing and the Legal System

In order to link healthcare services with the judicial system, forensic nursing is essential. To guarantee correct documentation and appropriate handling of evidence, nurses work in conjunction with law enforcement, forensic specialists, and legal professionals. Their participation promotes fair judicial decisions and strengthens the credibility of medico-legal evidence. Legal claims are greatly strengthened by forensic nurses' expert evidence and proper documentation.^{6,7}

The significance of forensic nursing

In order to support the legal system and provide victims of violence with comprehensive care, forensic nursing is crucial. It encourages patient-centered care, lowers the possibility of secondary victimization, and increases the precision of evidence collecting.³ By addressing violence-related concerns and promoting preventive measures, it also improves public health.⁸

Forensic Nursing in India

Forensic nursing is a new and growing discipline in India. Regulatory agencies' incorporation of forensic nursing into curricula has demonstrated its increasing significance.

However, obstacles such as a shortage of qualified personnel, low awareness, and inadequate infrastructure prevent it from being fully implemented. Despite these

obstacles, forensic nursing offers a great deal of promise to improve India's medico-legal system.⁹

Forensic Nursing's Challenges

Inadequate training programs, moral conundrums, emotional strain, and a lack of standardized procedures are just a few of the difficulties faced by forensic nurses.

The lack of coordination between the legal and medical systems further complicates the efficient operation of forensic nurses. The development of this expertise depends on addressing these issues.

Prospective Paths

Future advancements in forensic nursing should concentrate on developing policies, enhancing interdisciplinary cooperation, and providing specialized education and training.¹⁰ To improve forensic nursing's efficacy and recognition both internationally and in India, research and evidence-based procedures are required.

CONCLUSION

A crucial field that connects the legal and medical systems is forensic nursing. Through appropriate evidence processing and legal cooperation, it guarantees victims receive compassionate care while advancing justice. Forensic nurses will play a more significant part in contemporary healthcare systems as crime and violence rates continue to grow.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND SPONSORSHIP

Nil.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that they have no conflict of interest with regard to the content of the report.

REFERENCES

1. Lynch VA. Forensic nursing science: global strategies in health and justice. *Int J Nurs Sci.* 2011;48(1):3-7.
2. International Association of Forensic Nurses. What is forensic nursing? Elkridge: IAFN; 2020.
3. Hammer RM, Moynihan B, Pagliaro EM. Forensic nursing: a handbook for practice. 2nd ed. Burlington: Jones & Bartlett Learning; 2013.
4. Lynch VA, Duval JB. Forensic nursing science. 2nd ed. St. Louis: Elsevier Mosby; 2010.
5. Ledray LE. Sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) development & operation guide. Washington: US Department of Justice; 2013.
6. Sheridan DJ. The role of forensic nursing in violence prevention. *J Psychosoc Nurs Ment Health Serv.* 2016;54(9):11-14.
7. Pyrek KM. Forensic nursing. Boca Raton: CRC Press; 2010.
8. World Health Organization. Guidelines for medico-legal care for victims of sexual violence. Geneva: WHO; 2014.
9. Sharma S, Gupta S. Scope of forensic nursing in India: challenges and opportunities. *Indian J Forensic Med Toxicol.* 2022;16(2):45-49.
10. Kent-Wilkinson A. Forensic nursing: emerging roles and responsibilities. *J Forensic Nurs.* 2011;7(2):63-68.

