

Humanitarian Forensic Approaches in Forensic Nursing for Victim Management: A Vindicative Case of Victim's Reunion with Family

Sunit Bhalerao, Rajesh Babu*, Devashish Silajiya, Sweetey Raval

School of Medicolegal Studies, National Forensic Science University, Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India.

ABSTRACT

Forensic Nursing is one of the most evolving specialties in Nursing science. Forensic nursing has been conventionally considered a nursing science discipline that is more related to support and assistance in medicolegal cases. But in addition to this, it is also a skill of rendering comprehensive care to the victims of any trauma, violence, abuse, neglect and disasters. This sort of ideological humanitarian forensic approach has been referred to, in this article, as a case study which was found to be unique. For the obvious reason of maintaining professional secrecy and integrity of both the victim and the hospital where the person was treated, the identity has not been revealed/ disclosed (instead named as X). The above-stated person X was a victim of forced migration and was a mentally ill individual. The victim belonged to the state of Maharashtra and was reunited with the family after being provided and compassionate care by the prospective students of Forensic Nursing during their clinical posting. This case reveals the importance of forensic nursing with the holistic humanitarian approach, with the orientation of reuniting the victim with family.

Keywords: Forensic nursing, Psychiatric illness, Humanitarian forensics, Reunion.

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INTRODUCTION

Forensic Nursing is a well-known application of nursing skill and knowledge used to assist medical experts in the administration of justice in any such relevant cases, and the application of nursing knowledge for the holistic management of the victims of any trauma or disaster.¹ In the contemporary context, forensic nursing science is the application of nursing skills to every aspect of victim care, irrespective of the origin or cause of such an incidence (which has resulted in any kind of unforeseen/ hostile/ unlikely events)². The term forensic nursing implies every aspect of victim care, irrespective of the origin or cause of such an incident, which results in any individual or individuals deteriorating in deterioration of physical and mental condition.^{2,3} Forensic nursing plays a vital role in regaining the physical and mental homeostasis of the victims. The victims are traumatised, victimised, or ostracised in regaining normal homeostasis. Forensic nursing is not only applied in the cases of examination of the victims of sexual abuse, but it also includes a holistic management of the victims of trauma and disaster.³ This field plays a significant role in comprehensive victim care, especially in cases of abuse against women, children and the elderly and also the cases of human trafficking, forced migration, and disasters of any kind and origin.³ This encompasses the concepts of Humanitarian forensics, which is one of the recent advances in the broad spectrum of forensic science. Unlike the core objective of forensic sciences, here the expertise is associated with victim care and management. In any case of mass disaster or trauma, where the individual is affected physically and mentally humanitarian approach leads to their normalcy or homeostasis

Corresponding Author: Rajesh Babu, School of Medicolegal Studies, National Forensic Science University, Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India, e-mail: drrajeshbabu.babu@gmail.com

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in physical, clinical and psychological perspectives.⁴ In addition to that, the humanitarian forensic approach also plays a vital role in reuniting the missing individual with their family members. One of the other areas of humanitarian forensics is taking comprehensive care of the victims of disasters of any kind with the vital components of compassion, empathy and solace.⁴

Case Description

For the obvious reasons of integrity, modesty and professional secrecy, the victim's name and identity have not been revealed.

In this present article, emphasis has been placed on the humanitarian forensic approach in a particular case of a victim of a psychiatric illness by the student forensic nursing practitioners. Victim X had been out of their native place and house due to a hostile environment and had been admitted to the psychiatric hospital due to a history of mental illness. The particular victim was subjected to an interaction with the M.Sc.

Forensic Nursing students during their clinical posting were subjected to examination in the same way as the psychiatric victims in that hospital. The name of the hospital is also not revealed. However, during the process of interaction, the victim murmured in their native language, identifying themselves as a person from the neighbouring state of Maharashtra. A thorough discussion in Marathi revealed that the victim had been wandering in neighbouring states, as they were not in a good state of mind. After realising that the victim had been displaced with a fragile mental state, the individual was admitted to the psychiatric hospital. A routine medical and psychological examination was conducted in a complete state of restraints within the hospital, but the recovery was slow. Once the students interacted with the subject during their posting, it was found that the victim could only communicate in Marathi. Among the posted students, a few spoke Marathi and started interacting with the individual and got confirmation from the victim's brother. Once the information was sent to the family members about the physical condition of the individual, the brother made calls to the nursing officials about the mental and physical condition.

Based on the general physical examination and the psychological assessment, the victim was found to have been forcefully migrated. The victim only has the acquaintance of their mother tongue, i.e., Marathi. In such a scenario, the origin and the history could not be obtained. However, upon comprehensive clinical examinations, it was found to be a case of human trafficking /or exploitation, with the emaciated look and the probable deprivation of basic needs of nutrition (vital)⁵. There were minor, old healed bruises suggestive of trauma. The most remarkable aspect of the case was that victim X was a psychologically ill individual.^{5,6} There was a point of the re-emergence of the contact number of their kin as the individual had been whispering in Marathi. The forensic nursing interns were able to decipher the intermittently murmured words and confirmed them in the same language that the victim understood. Later on, a telephone conversation was arranged to have an assessment of the genuineness of the number that was whispered. There was an interaction between the nursing interns and the family members of the victim. In the initial stages, the family members were so reluctant and mistrustful of the statements mentioning the presence of the victim under their observation. Once the family expressed their concern to have a video call with the interns, the same was arranged. They were heaven-struck. They became speechless

and were so elated to see the individual alive (since what they believed was otherwise). Finally, they came from their native state in Maharashtra to Gujarat to take the victim back with them. There was a wonderful reunion of the victim with the family. This vindicates the effective and professional practices of forensic nurses that are being contemplated in their true sense.

CONCLUSION

Forensic nursing is popularly considered and presumed to be the specialty associated with the examination of victims of abuse against women. There is a vast potential that is yet to be explored for the capability and the efficiency of forensic nursing professionals, as they are among the true saviours of the victims of any trauma and disaster, irrespective of their causes.⁷ They are the true protectors of the victims of any unforeseen events without discrimination of caste, creed, race and gender. The prospective forensic nursing professionals are one of the most supportive pillars of victims' care with the comprehensive clinical, physical, psychosocial, medico-social and medicolegal perspectives, with the guidance and supervision of the medical officers in their respective hospitals/ clinical setups and medical teaching institutions, all other clinical care providing organisations^{7,8}

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