

Question: What is the history of sexual abuse examinations in molestation cases?

In the mid 1980's Dr. Bruce Woodling , a pediatrician from San Luis Obispo, published an article on the signs of molestation in genital and anal examinations. The local district attorney sent children to Dr. Woodling that were suspected of being victims of molestation. Dr. Woodling examined them and found erythema , which means redness, a rounded hymen edge rather than a bladed edge, bumps on the hymen, increased vascularity, and indents in the curvature of the hymen. He concluded that these and other signs he noted were proof of molestation. His work spread across the country and became the accepted dogma.

It was total junk science. Why you say? Because no one had ever done a study on normal non-abused children to establish was the normal range of anatomy of non abused children. If you do not know what is normal, you cannot know what is abnormal.

In the early 1990's the first controlled studies were done. And what did they find was normal-- erythema or redness, rounded hymenal edges, bumps on the hymen, increased vascularity, indents in the curvature of the hymen, and on and on. What Dr. Woodling had described as signs of abuse were in fact normal anatomy.

Now the examinations of children has turned into a word game. The doctor examines the child and says that “. the findings are consistent with molestation”. Most people, the police officers, and jurors believe that means that they have found evidence-- but no so fast. Doctors may have a long list of findings of erythema, increased vascularity, etc. etc., which are normal. But most times they have found nothing. So why has the prosecution doctor call it “consistent with molestation”. Well, you can touch someone on the vagina and leave no evidence of trauma. Therefore, no evidence of trauma or no evidence is also consistent with molestation. Using this play on words every child in the world has anatomy that is consistent with molestation. To counter this junk science and the word games played by advocate doctors we call on our own experts. The Clancy Litigation Group maintains a library of controlled studies on normal genital and anal anatomy. The following is a clip from one of our training videos that we use to train judges and attorneys about this area of medicine.