



CPU-Net MEDICAL ALERT

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What is PEER REVIEW?

Peer review is a process of examination of professional or academic efficiency, competence, etc. by others in the same occupation. In cases of child abuse, the peer review would be the process whereby child protection specialists would examine forensic evidence in order to analyze findings of the physician-examiner in the absence of examiner and reviewer bias.

Why do we need to do Peer Review?

Peer review or peer support is a non-judgmental learning tool that is proving to be beneficial for all the people involved. It is a way for everyone to learn from each other and share ideas. Each person has valuable input to contribute while working together toward the improvement of outcomes for children and families. It also allows others to network with other programs, share information and resources, and learn from one another.

As more child abuse cases are heard in Philippine courts and as judges and lawyers become more sophisticated in their litigation (*we hope!*), the interpretation of findings as well as the expertise of the physician examiner may be put to question by either the defense or prosecution by virtue of examiner bias. The advantage of a case that has undergone review by experts is that it can be considered a forensically defensible legal case in court by excluding this bias.

What are the objectives of the Peer Review?

1. To improve one's clinical eye in detecting injury using pictures.
2. To exchange knowledge and experience
3. To learn the process of peer review
4. To develop recommendations for improvement of child protection services

How do we conduct the Peer Review?

Medicine including the practice of child protection encompasses a range of appropriate differences in opinion.

There may be differences in views on many issues with the minority view not being less than legitimate as compared to the majority view. However, child protection specialists should base their pronouncements on reasonably current knowledge after conducting a thorough and impartial review of the facts.

Peer review team is composed of child protection specialist members of the CPU-Net. Team members who are new to the peer review process are paired with experienced reviewers. A brief summary but without any patient identification will be presented during the review. The discussion should also include photo documentation and other forensic evidence that may have been gathered about the case.

Recommended qualifications for the Peer Review Team:

1. The physician examiner is the doctor who actually examined the child and took the photographs and/or collected other forensic evidence
2. The peer review team is composed of child protection specialists who have been fully trained in the recognition and management of child abuse cases
3. The peer review team should be familiar with the clinical practice of this specialty including the subject matter of the case and has been in active practice in cases of child protection.

Recommended guidelines during the Peer Review:

1. The case is presented by the physician examiner and should include the facts of the case without identifying the child. These facts are presented in a thorough and objective manner and should not exclude data that would favor either the defense or the prosecution's case. The facts may include the age of the child, the time of incident(s) and the time of examination.
2. Photo-documentation is then presented to the team.
3. The members of the review team should then give their opinion based on the facts presented.
4. The physician examiner may then concur or disagree with the findings regarding the case.



ANNOUNCEMENT: *We will be having a PEER REVIEW SESSION with Dr. Marcellina Mian of the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect (ISPCAN) on the afternoon of Tuesday, Nov. 11, 2003 at the Pan Pacific. We strongly recommend all CPU-Net members to bring in their photos for the cases which they want reviewed.*

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2nd Annual Conference
"Catching Fire: Child Protection in the Philippines"
November 10 & 11, 2003, Pan Pacific Manila

We would like to reserve a seat and a conference kit for you. Kindly RSVP on or before October 24, 2003!!!