

## 9. Pregnancy Risk Evaluation and Care

Recommendations at a glance for health care providers to evaluate and treat pregnancy:

- Discuss the probability of pregnancy with female patients.
  - Administer a pregnancy test for all patients with reproductive capability.
  - Discuss treatment options with patients, including reproductive health services.
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Patients of different ages, social, cultural, and religious/spiritual backgrounds may have varying feelings regarding acceptable treatment options. Examiners and other involved health care personnel must be careful not to influence patients' choices of treatment.

**Discuss the probability of pregnancy with female patients.** The risk of pregnancy from sexual assault is estimated to be 2 to 5 percent. However, pregnancy resulting from sexual assault often is a cause of great concern and significant additional trauma to the victim, so victims' fears should be taken seriously.<sup>282</sup>

**Conduct a pregnancy test for all patients with reproductive capability (with their consent).**<sup>283</sup> An exception is if a patient clearly is pregnant. If a patient is pregnant, the pregnancy may affect what medications can be administered or prescribed in the course of or after the exam.

**Discuss treatment options with patients.**<sup>284</sup> In cases of sexual assault, pregnancy is often an overwhelming and genuine fear. Therefore, discuss treatment options with patients, including reproductive health services.

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<sup>282</sup> L. Ledray, *SANE Development and Operation Guide*, 1998, p. 75.

<sup>283</sup> Preexisting pregnancy may raise patient privacy issues. If the case is prosecuted, the prosecutor should work to address concerns such as this one.

<sup>284</sup> The National Sexual Violence Resource Center (877-739-3895 or 717-909-0710) offers more detailed information about sexual assault and pregnancy on their Web site at [www.nsvrc.org](http://www.nsvrc.org).