AAHUNG’S RESEARCH STUDY ON THE MEDICO-LEGAL SECTOR IN KARACHI.
What is the Medico-legal Department?

In the event of certain injuries requiring medical and legal intervention individuals need to be examined by a government appointed doctor working in one of the designated public hospitals.

The public hospital section where such patients are examined and treated is referred to as the medico-legal department.
Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the **effectiveness** of medico-legal services in Karachi;
2. To assess the **knowledge and adherence** to policy protocol of all the stakeholders in the medico-legal sector;
3. To assess the **practices and challenges** faced by stakeholders involved in the medico-legal sector; and
4. To develop **recommendations** to improve medico-legal services which can be submitted to the relevant government authorities
Stakeholders

• Medico-legal Officers
• Additional Police Surgeons
• Police Surgeon
• Office of the Chemical Examiner
• Client/Survivor
Methodology and Research Design

• Planning Phase
  • Comprehensive Literature Review
  • Interviews with medico-legal stakeholders
  • Analysis of select medico-legal certificates (for the period 2003)

• Sampling: All stakeholders interviewed

• Data Collection: Quantitative and qualitative interviews
CASE STUDY 1

Civil Hospital Karachi – 2003 Data
Analysis of select ML certificates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of weeks</th>
<th># of cases</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>one wk (0 - 7 days)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 wks (8 - 15 days)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 wks (16 - 23 days)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 mth (24 - 31 days)</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 mth + (32 days +)</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undisclosed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Analysis of select ML certificates
CASE STUDY 2

Karachi Crime Statistics
2000 – 2004 Data
Analysis of crime statistics for 2000-2004
Analysis of crime statistics for 2000-2004
Areas of Research

- Qualifications and Trainings
- Facilities and Equipment
- Prophylactic Measures
- Salaries and Budgets
- DNA Testing/Forensic Analysis
- Informed Consent
- Virginity Testing
- Counseling Services
- Examination Costs
- Medico-legal Certificate Related
- Recommendations
RESEARCH FINDINGS
Research Findings

- Poor implementation of government policies and protocols
- Lack of specialization and formal trainings
- Lack of trained counselors
- Insufficient number of MLOs in relation to the total pop. of Karachi (specifically female MLOs)
  - 51MLOs servicing 14 million people
- Dissatisfaction with salaries and benefits
  - 88% expressed dissatisfaction
Research Findings (cont’d)

• Cost of transportation to and from court has to be borne by MLOs
  - Disincentive to make court appearance
• No fee for the examination
  - But, existence of associated costs
• DNA testing is not conducted very often
Research Findings (cont’d)

- Written and informed consent from clients not always practiced
- Pregnancy testing offered depending on time elapsed since rape
- Emergency contraception not offered
- STIs testing not always conducted  
  - 60% said not conducted
- Existence of pressure to alter contents of the medico-legal reports  
  -73% said faced a great deal of pressure
Research Findings (cont’d)

• Lack of basic equipment and facilities (proper lighting, examination table etc).
• Delays in forensic analysis and subsequently delays in issuing of the final medico-legal report
• Absence of a standardized medico-legal certificate format
• Virginity testing still practiced
Research Findings - Office of the Chemical Examiner

• No standard procedure or established time line for analysing samples.
• Office has a running stockroom and that it was unusual for them to suffer a shortage of any materials they may need.
• No training on presenting findings in court.
• Attending court to provide testimony can be difficult.
• Limited hours of service
  - M to Th and Sat: 9 -4 pm Fri: 9-12pm; Closed Sunday
  - Police sometimes allow samples to pile up before depositing them in bulk
• Bribery and corruption not major issues
RECOMMENDATIONS
Recommendations – Facilities and Equipment

• Provide basic forensic equipment to the medico-legal centers so chemical analysis can be carried out at the center.
• Increase the numbers of medico-legal officers
• Ensure adequate storage and transportation facilities
• All centers should be made fully functional
• Provide separate examination rooms for both men and women
Recommendations – Facilities and Equipment (cont’d)

• Provide a separate washroom for female MLOs and clients
• Introduction of a rape kit
• Basic equipment and facilities states in WHO medico-legal guidelines should be provided to all centers
• Ensure forensic evidence is transported to the Chemical Examiner’s Office on the same day it is collected
Recommendations – Budget

• Separate the medico-legal sector budget from the public hospitals’ budget.
• Provide a separate travel allowance for court attendance to MLOs and personnel from the Chemical Examiner’s Office.
Recommendations – Training/Duties

• Provide comprehensive and standardised trainings/refresher trainings
  -MLOs, APS, CE

• Provide a job description to all new and existing Medico-legal Officers

• Institute specialised protocols for the care of survivors of sexual violence
Recommendations – Holistic Care

• Ensure availability of Emergency Contraception for survivors of sexual violence
• Provide testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV to all survivors of sexual violence.
• Expand the scope of medico-legal services to include testing and care for pregnancy and abortion.
Recommendations – Holistic Care (cont’d)

• Introduce a consent form for clients at the medico-legal centres.
• Eliminate the practise of performing the ‘virginity test’ on survivors of sexual violence.
• Provide trained counselors to serve the needs of survivors of sexual violence at the medico-legal centres.
• Strive for more common use of DNA testing in matters related to sexual violence.
Recommendations – ML Certificates

• Ensure that the medico-legal certificate is in a bilingual (English and Urdu) format.
• Introduce one standardised medico-legal certificate for survivors of sexual violence across all centres.
Recommendations – M & E

• Introduce mechanisms for the monitoring and evaluation of medico-legal sector personnel to ensure that protocols are being disseminated and followed.
• Introduce an independent review of the medico-legal sector’s functioning on an annual basis.
THANK YOU!