



**Title:** Exploration of “Out of Hours” Calls to the Child and Adolescent Sexual Assault Treatment Service in Galway Over a One-Year Period to Quantify the Need for Continued Extended Hours Service

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**Abstract:**

**Introduction:** The Galway Child and Adolescent Sexual Assault Treatment Service (CASATS) operates within a Barnahus model on site on weekdays from 08.00 to 16.00 hours with 24/7/365 out of hours on call availability. Service specifications in Ireland recommend working towards provision of a 12/7 (08.00 to 20.00 hours) service for paediatric FME, but do not detail recommendations for “out of hours” care for children under 14 years after 20.00 hours. This review sought to quantify the number of “out of hours” telephone queries from professionals exploring the need for a paediatric FME for suspected sexual harm and the number of children subsequently examined “out of hours” by Galway CASATS in 2024 to determine the need for a continued extended hours service.

**Methods:** Data were collected anonymously through retrospective review of medical notes and from records of telephone queries received from 01/01/2024 to 31/12/2024. Inclusion criteria were (a) All telephone queries to Galway CASATS (“in” and “out of hours”) relating to the need for FME in children (< 18 years) where sexual harm had been disclosed, witnessed or strongly suspected (b) All “in” and “out of hours” FMEs undertaken in Galway CASATS for children (< 18 years) including those where agreement had been reached that FME would be beneficial, following discussion (“in hours”) at Barnahus West Interagency planning meetings. Exclusion criteria were (i) Children for whom FME was not indicated, following “in hours” interagency Barnahus discussion (ii) The 41 Children 14-18 years in 2024 supported through the adult sexual assault treatment units, all eligible for Barnahus support.

**Results:** The number of telephone queries and requests for FME arising from Barnahus West in 2024 related to 126 children. Thirty-eight telephone queries concerning 42 children were received outside of Galway CASATS' normal workday of 08.00 to 16.00 hours. Seventeen calls concerning 20 children were received outside the 08.00 to 20.00 hours 12/7 paediatric FME service specifications for Ireland. Of the 93 children who attended for FME in Galway CASATS in 2024, 19 (19/93 = 20%) required urgent "out of hours" examination (outside of 08:00-16:00 Monday to Friday workweek) of whom 5 (5/93 = 5%) required examination outside of 08.00 to 20.00 hours 12/7 paediatric FME service specifications for Ireland.

**Conclusion:** This review supports the need for continued 24/7/365 on call services for FME for sexual assault in children under 14 years of age.

### **Biography:**

**Dr. Erica Lahoud** is a South African-qualified medical doctor currently serving as a **Paediatric Registrar at University Hospital Galway, Ireland**. With a strong foundation in paediatrics, she is dedicated to advancing child healthcare and contributing to research that enhances clinical outcomes and patient well-being.