

**SCOPE/APPLICABILITY:**

This SOP applies broadly to all OB/GYN department divisions and General Surgery divisions.

**PURPOSE:**

This protocol is to set a reasonable standard for medical providers and learners (fellows, residents and medical students) in performing a pelvic exam on an anesthetized patient (i.e. pelvic exam under anesthesia or EUA).

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Explicit informed consent must be obtained from a patient, or a surrogate decision-maker, prior to a pelvic exam under anesthesia. This consent must explicitly inform the patient of the presence of learners and that a pelvic exam will be performed by the learner/s. Furthermore, the patient should be educated on the teaching purposes of an exam under anesthesia and given the opportunity to opt out of more than one exam under anesthesia.

**BACKGROUND:**

The practice of pelvic examination on patients undergoing gynecologic surgery has been present for many years. The relaxed state of the patient after administration of anesthesia permits a more in-depth ability to determine the size, mobility and descent of pelvic structures and may better inform surgical approach. Additionally, learners may benefit in palpating pelvic structures that are more difficult to appreciate in an un-anesthetized patient. However, despite the commonality of this procedure at the time of gynecologic procedures and surgery, the practice of obtaining informed consent has not been consistent. Increasingly, this is felt to be a breach of patient autonomy. Most major medical organizations including the American Academy of Medical Colleges (AAMC), the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG) and the American Medical Association (AMA) agree that explicit informed consent for EUA should be obtained before any gynecologic surgery. In addition, the presence of learners in the operating room alongside the operating surgeon needs to be explicitly delineated and informed consent obtained for any learner performing a pelvic exam under anesthesia.

**PROCEDURES:**

Vulvar/perineal exam

- Skin around the vulva and introitus is inspected and palpated for masses and/or lesions making note of clitoral hood and urethra

- Inguinal areas may be palpated for nodal disease

Speculum exam

- Vagina and cervix are visualized for lesions noting anatomy

Bimanual exam

- Vagina and cervix are palpated for lesions
- Cervix and uterus are palpated for axis, size, position, mobility and descent
- Adnexae are palpated bilaterally for masses and position

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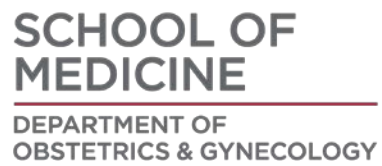
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## Prepared by: Maria C. Montoya, MD, FACOG &amp; Malia Ashley

Approval:   
Chair, Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology

Date

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