

# **Human Trafficking: What Healthcare Providers Need to Know**

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## Objectives

- Acknowledge the magnitude of the human trafficking crisis in the United States and in Ohio
- Become familiar with potential trafficking victim presentations to the healthcare system
- Identify medical issues that human trafficking victims develop as a result of their captivity
- Understand resources available to assist human trafficking victims during and after their captivity

## What Is It?

- Modern-day slavery
- Use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain form of labor or commercial sex act
- Hidden crime, as victims rarely come forward
  - Language barriers
  - Fear of the traffickers and/or law enforcement

## The Business of Modern Day Slavery

Human traffickers make \$150 billion/year in profits, but it is estimated that only \$124 million/year\* is spent globally fighting it. Human trafficking is the fastest growing criminal enterprise. We must do more.

Human Rights First is bringing together governments, law enforcement and the private sector to disrupt—and eventually bankrupt—human trafficking.



\* Labor, military or paramilitary forces (including child soldiers and the like)

**\$150 BILLION**  
EACH YEAR IN PROFITS

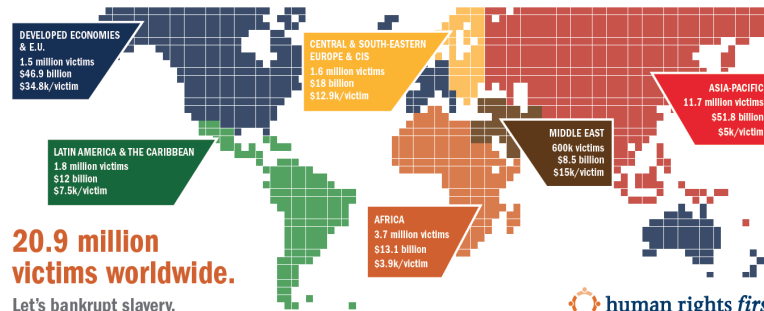
**\$99 BILLION** SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

**\$34B** CONSTRUCTION, MINING, MANUFACTURING, & UTILITIES

**\$9B** AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY & FISHING

**\$8B** DOMESTIC SERVICE

### MAP: VICTIMS & PROFITS BY REGION



**20.9 million** victims worldwide.

Let's bankrupt slavery.

For more information visit [humanrightsfirst.org](http://humanrightsfirst.org)

**human rights first**

American ideals. Universal values.

Data from International Labour Organization (ILO), 2014, Profits and Poverty: The Economics of Forced Labour (Geneva); and "M. Uekert, "OECD and Modern Slavery: How much real money is spent to tackle the issue?", Anti-Trafficking Review, issue 3, 2014, pp. 133-150.

- Human Trafficking makes more money than Google, Starbucks, Nike, and the NFL combined
  - 150 billion dollars/year vs 136.6 billion dollars/year

## How Big Is It?

- ~75% female
- ~25% children
- Only a small fraction (i.e. ~50,000 victims) are identified by law enforcement
- Average age of entry into sex trafficking is 12-14 years

## Locations of Potential Human Trafficking Cases in the U.S.

- Port states
  - Florida
  - California
  - New York
  - Texas

## Factors Contributing to Trafficking

- Drug or alcohol dependency
- Runaway or homeless status
  - Average 48 hours on the street before being approached by a pimp
- Undocumented status
- Oppressed/impoverished/marginalized status
- History of child abuse
  - 80-90% of prostituted adolescents report this

## Human Trafficking Victims in the Medical Setting

- ~30% of trafficked individuals will be exposed to the healthcare system for treatment of illness or injury during their captivity
  - Rarely recognized as victims
  - Fear of captor
  - Distrust of authority
  - Unfamiliar with culture or language
  - Ashamed about their situation

## Physician Contact with Trafficking Victims

- Survey of National Health Service (UK) physicians
- Knowledge and confidence to respond to human trafficking victims
- 87% respondents didn't know what questions to ask
- 78% reported insufficient training to assist victims
- 95% were unaware of the scale of the issue

## Physician Contact with Trafficking Victims

- Survey of pediatricians and other pediatric HCP
- 63% of respondents reported no previous training on sex trafficking
- 48% were able to identify a sex trafficking victim in a case study
- Those with training were significantly more likely to report trafficking as a major problem locally and to have confidence in identifying a victim

## Victim Presentation

- Victims will often present with their trafficker
  - Male or female
  - Well-dressed, well-spoken, caring, sympathetic, “rehearsed”
  - Familiar with the spoken language

## Red Flags



- “Friend” (trafficker) doesn’t allow the patient to speak or answer questions
- Will not allow the patient to be in the room alone with medical provider
- Vague or inconsistent explanations for injuries
- Victims may not know their address or what city/state they are in
- May not have any identification documents
- Disclosures of very high numbers of sexual encounters or unwanted pregnancies

## Careful History-Taking

- Get potential victim away from his/her trafficker!
  - Cite clinic/Hospital/ED policy of private physical examination
- Use an interpreter as needed
- Be mindful of words used in questioning
  - Most victims will not understand the words “trafficking” or “coerced”

## Helpful Questions

- Has anyone at home or work ever harmed you?
- Have you ever been forced to do something you didn't want to do?
- Do you have to ask permission to eat/sleep/use the bathroom?
  - Have you ever been denied these things? Medical care?
- Have you ever been threatened for trying to leave your job?
  - Has your family ever been threatened?
- Can you come and go from your home/job as you please?
  - Are there locks on the doors that prevent this?



## Physical Examination

- Thorough!
- Signs of dehydration, malnutrition, exhaustion
  - Deprivation of water, food, sleep
- Inflicted injuries
- Signs of untreated/undiagnosed chronic diseases
- History or physical findings of substance abuse

## Specific Systems

- Skin Exam
  - Bruising, bite marks, cigarette burns, traumatic alopecia
  - Extremity deformities or joint pain (poorly healed fractures)
  - Ligature marks and tattoos

## Specific Systems

- Genital/anal injuries not uncommon
  - Sexual abuse/rape
  - Unsafe abortions
  - Perforation from inserted objects
  - Perforation from retained foreign bodies (i.e. gauze to prevent menstruation)
  - Untreated STD's

## Examples of Injuries and Illnesses

Injuries	Physical Illness	Mental Illnesses and Psychiatric Symptoms
Genital trauma	Sexually transmitted diseases	Depression
Rape, foreign object	Chlamydia, gonorrhea, HIV/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome	Suicidal ideation
Anal trauma	Pelvic inflammatory disease	Anxiety
Rape, fisting	Tuberculosis	Panic attacks
Bruise, abrasion, whip marks	Substance abuse and withdrawal	Dissociative reaction
ligature marks	Gastrointestinal disorders	Agoraphobia
Head trauma	Complications from untreated chronic diseases	Substance abuse
Lacerations	Asthma, diabetes, etc	Poor self-esteem and feelings of worthlessness
Knife, razor	Frequent respiratory infections	Shame and guilt
Burns	Chronic headaches	Fear for family member's safety Memory loss
Cigarette, iron, acid	Back pain	
Gunshot wounds	Deformities and chronic pain from improperly healed fractures and strains	
Run over or dragged by car	Malnutrition	
Clumps of hair pulled out	Dental problems	
Unwilling pregnancy		
Unsafe abortion		

## Medical Management

- SANE exam/“rape kit”
- Pregnancy/STD testing
  - Also consider TB testing if victim is from outside United States
- Gonorrhea/chlamydia prophylaxis
- HIV prophylaxis
  - Check LFT's first
  - 40-90% prevalence in sex trafficking victims due to unprotected sex with multiple partners and/or injectable drug use
- Consider Hepatitis B prophylaxis

## Medical Management

- Tetanus vaccination
- Mental health services/psychiatric evaluation
- Keep them admitted!!
  - Psychiatric evaluation
  - Pelvic inflammatory disease
  - Safety

## Reporting

- Get social work involved
- Contact law enforcement if imminent danger
  - If not, consider informing patient before reporting
  - Not a requirement
  - Could potentially put patient in more danger
- If a minor, you are mandated to contact CPS

## National Human Trafficking Hotline

- National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline
  - 1-888-373-7888
  - 24 hours/day
  - 200+ languages
  - Text option
  - Confidential
  - Can provide guidance regarding assessment and indicators of trafficking
  - Can find resources and develop a patient-specific safety plan for the victim

# Case Study

## Case Study

- S.M. is a 26-year-old female who came to the United States from Mexico 2 years ago
- She is from a small Mixtec farming community in Oaxaca and speaks Mixteco fluently. She speaks some Spanish and no English

## Case Study

- S.M. left two young children behind in Mexico with her mother and came to the United States with her boyfriend and the help of a smuggler. She was told that when she arrived in the United States, she would be able to find work and pay the smuggler back the nearly \$8,000 she owed for safe passage across the border
- After paying her debt, she had plans to remit money to her mother in Mexico for the care of her children, hoping that they might eventually join her in the United States

## Case Study

- During the border crossing, S.M. walked for days in the desert with little food or water
- Her boyfriend was not able to protect her during the crossing, and she was robbed and gang-raped by a group of bandits
- Upon arrival to the United States, she was transported to Ohio, where she was placed with a family as their nanny. Shortly afterward, she discovered that she was pregnant with her third child

## Case Study

- Her boyfriend found seasonal work nearby picking tomatoes, but when the season ended, he disappeared, leaving her behind
- The Ohio family treats her well, and she enjoys caring for their two young children in addition to her own one and a half-year-old. They pay her \$6 an hour and give her a room

## Case Study

- Recently, the smuggler has been making harassing phone calls to the house about the money he is still owed, and S.M. is worried she will lose her job if he does not stop calling. She has been unable to pay him back because he continues to charge her high interest on her debt
- He has threatened to harm her mother and children in Mexico if she does not pay him back soon

## Case Study

- Fearing for her job and the lives of her family in Mexico, S.M. agreed to pay back some of her debt by having sex with the smuggler and his friends

## Case Study

- S.M. is being seen at your clinic today for abdominal pain, unusual vaginal discharge with a foul odor, painful intercourse, painful urination, and irregular menstrual bleeding
- A male, who is interpreting for her, accompanies her into the examination room. He states that he is her boyfriend and is holding their child
- There is no one at the clinic that speaks Mixteco



## What Do You Do Next?

- Do you allow the man to stay in the exam room? To interpret?
- What would you diagnose her with? How would you treat her?
- Anything else?

## What Do You Do Next?

- Do you allow the man to stay in the room during your evaluation? To interpret?
  - No!!
- What would you diagnose her with? How would you treat her?
  - You could diagnose her with PID (or suspicion thereof). She needs IV antibiotics
- Anything else?
  - Call the National Human Trafficking Hotline Number

## Federal Legislation

- **Trafficking Victims Protection Act (2000)**

### 3 Elements Necessary to Meet Trafficking Definition:

(1)	(2)	(3)
Process Action	Particular Means	For the purpose of
Recruiting		Involuntary Servitude
OR	Force	OR
Harboring	OR	Dept Bondage
OR	Fraud	OR
Moving	OR	Slavery
OR	Coercion	OR
Obtaining A person		Sexual Exploitation

## Federal Legislation

- **Trafficking Victims Protection Act (2000)**
  - Prevention through public awareness programs overseas and State Department-led “Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking” program
  - Protection through visas and services
  - Prosecution of trafficking as a federal crime
- Re-authorized multiple times, last in 2017
- Bi-partisan

## T Visa

- Trafficking visa
- Undocumented victims
- Created by US Department of Justice in 2010
- Victims (and some family members) can remain in the United States if they comply with “reasonable requests for assistance in the investigation or prosecution of acts of trafficking”

## U Visa

- Non-immigrant visa
- Set aside for victims of crimes (and immediate family members) who have suffered extensive physical and/or mental abuse
- Have to be willing to assist law enforcement and government officials in prosecution of criminal activity

## National Awareness

- National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month every January
- Proclamation in 2011
- Anniversary is known as National Human Trafficking Awareness Day
  - January 11
  - Many mass campaigns observed across the country

## How Can I Help?

- Contact local Salvation Army
  - Awareness initiatives
  - Shelter/food/clothing
  - Legal aid
  - Substance abuse treatment

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Questions?

