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Human Trafficking & Forced Labor: The Nexus to U.S. Healthcare & Supply Chain

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Learning Objectives



At the end of this session, participants should be able to:

1. Recall the prevalence of human trafficking in the healthcare system and supply chain
2. Identify human trafficking risks and potential victims
3. Recognize resources to support building and deploying an anti-human trafficking program within healthcare organizations



Background

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(HHS) Administration for Children & Families

Poll Question #1



True or False: All human trafficking involves sex

- A. True
- B. False

Answer: Poll Question #1

True or False: All human trafficking involves sex

A. True

B. **False**



Human Trafficking Defined



A crime that involves compelling or coercing a person to provide labor or services, or to engage in commercial sex acts.

Sex Trafficking

- Encompasses activities involved when a trafficker uses force, fraud or coercion to compel another person to engage in a commercial sex act or causes a child to engage in a commercial sex act

Forced Labor

- Also referred to as labor trafficking, encompasses activities involved when a person uses force, fraud or coercion to exploit the labor or services of another person

The A-M-P Model		
Action	Means*	Purpose
Induce Recruits Harbors Transports Provides or Obtains	Force Fraud or Coercion	Commercial Sex or Labor/Services
*Minors induced into commercial sex are human trafficking victims – regardless if force, fraud, or coercion is present		

Source:
<https://humantraffickinghotline.org/sites/default/files/AMP%20Model.pdf>. Accessed 7/10/24.

Source: <https://www.justice.gov/humantrafficking/what-is-human-trafficking>. Accessed 7/10/24.

Human Trafficking in the Healthcare System



Victims of human trafficking may present in healthcare settings, often with physical injuries or psychological trauma.

Emergency Departments

Women & Children Services

OB/GYN

Behavioral Health

Urgent Care Centers

- These environments frequently encounter trafficking victims due to their acute care nature and the types of services they provide.
- It is estimated that **67.6%** of individuals who have experienced trafficking **encountered a healthcare professional during their trafficking experience.**

Source: https://www.forensicnurses.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/iafn_position_statement_huma.pdf#:~:text=URL%3A%20https%3A%2F%2Fwww.forensicnurses.org%2Fwp

10 Red Flags That Your Patient Could be a Victim



1. Clinical presentation and oral history don't match up
2. Oral history is scripted, memorized or mechanical
3. Someone with the patient exerts an unusual amount of control over the visit
4. Patient appears fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, hypervigilant or paranoid
5. Patient is concerned about being arrested or jailed
6. Patient is concerned for his/her family's safety
7. Evidence that care has been lacking for prior or existing conditions
8. Tattoos or insignia indicative of ownership
9. Occupational-type injuries or physical ailments linked to their work
10. Sexually transmitted infections

Source: <https://www.aha.org/identifying-and-assisting-victims-human-trafficking>

Resources to Develop a Program Within Healthcare Organizations



A human trafficking program involves specialized resources and guidelines to effectively identify, respond to and support victims of human trafficking. Some key resources and organizations that can provide guidance and support are:

- National Human Trafficking Hotline: **1-888-373-7888** or **text HELP to 233733**
- Polaris Project
- Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP)
- HEAL Trafficking
- American Hospital Association (AHA)
- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
- Local and State Health Departments
- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
- Local Community Non-Profit Organizations

Audience Poll Question #2



Members: Does your organization have a plan in place for identifying potential victims of human trafficking in a care setting?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Not sure

Human Trafficking / Forced Labor in the Healthcare Supply Chain



Many healthcare products are sourced from countries with weak labor regulations. Companies should ensure their supply chains are free from exploitation through rigorous:

Audits

Ethical
Sourcing
Guidelines

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted vulnerabilities in the supply chain for PPE. Reports emerged of forced labor being used in the production of masks, gloves and other essential items.

Source: <https://www.aha.org/news/blog/2023-01-05-what-you-need-know-about-forced-labor-health-care-supply-chain-and-services>

Red Flags in the Healthcare Supply Chain



1. **Lack of Transparency** – Suppliers unwilling to disclose information about their subcontractors, labor practices or sourcing locations
2. **Poor Working Conditions** – Evidence of substandard working conditions, including overcrowded housing, unsafe working environments and lack of basic amenities
3. **Inconsistent Documentation** – Inadequate or inconsistent documentation of workers, such as missing contracts, lack of identification or discrepancies in records
4. **Signs of Coercion** – Reports of coercion or abuse, such as threats, physical violence or psychological manipulation used to control workers

Source: <https://www.aha.org/identifying-and-assisting-victims-human-trafficking>



Discussion

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Assessment Question #1



What estimated percentage of human trafficking victims encounter healthcare professionals during their exploitation?

- A. 67.6%
- B. 45.7%
- C. 82.1%
- D. 53.8%

Answer: Question #1



What estimated percentage of human trafficking victims encounter healthcare professionals during their exploitation?

- A. **67.6%**
- B. 45.7%
- C. 82.1%
- D. 53.8%

Assessment Question #2



What is a key indicator that may help healthcare professionals identify a potential victim of human trafficking?

- A. The patient has multiple untreated injuries in various stages of healing and is hesitant to explain how they occurred.
- B. The patient is accompanied by someone who insists on speaking for them and is overly controlling.
- C. The patient shows signs of malnutrition or poor physical health, despite claiming to have regular access to food and shelter.
- D. All of the above

Answer: Question #2



What is a key indicator that may help healthcare professionals identify a potential victim of human trafficking?

- A. The patient has multiple untreated injuries in various stages of healing and is hesitant to explain how they occurred.
- B. The patient is accompanied by someone who insists on speaking for them and is overly controlling.
- C. The patient shows signs of malnutrition or poor physical health, despite claiming to have regular access to food and shelter.
- D. All of the above**

Assessment Question #3



Where can healthcare organizations find specialized resources and toolkits to support the development of anti-human trafficking programs specifically tailored for healthcare settings?

- A. International Red Cross
- B. HEAL Trafficking
- C. National Human Trafficking Hotline
- D. World Health Organization

Answer: Question #3



Where can healthcare organizations find specialized resources and toolkits to support the development of anti-human trafficking programs specifically tailored for healthcare settings?

- A. International Red Cross
- B. HEAL Trafficking
- C. **National Human Trafficking Hotline –**
<https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/resources>
- D. World Health Organization

References



- [2023 Trafficking in Persons Report](#), U.S. Department of State, June 15, 2023
- [Federal Statutory and Regulatory Framework on Forced Labor in Healthcare and Public Health Supply Chains](#), DHHS Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP), September 14, 2022
- [Federal Cases Involving Forced Labor of Health Professionals](#), DHHS Office on Trafficking in Persons, February 17, 2023
- [Trauma-Informed Considerations for Anti-Trafficking Efforts in the COVID-19 Environment, its Aftermath, and in the Context of Possible Future Pandemics](#), US Department of State, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons
- National Human Trafficking Hotline's Resource Library
<https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/resources>



Thank You

