

“Human Trafficking In Your Backyard: Know The Signs And How To Help”

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Abstract : Human trafficking is a multi-billion-dollar criminal industry that affects 24.9 million people around the world. There are several different types of trafficking, the most common being sex trafficking, labor trafficking, and domestic servitude. Survival sex is common in the pediatric population, as they engage in sex for food, a place to sleep, or other basic needs. Statistics show that health care workers are at a unique advantage to help identify victims and get them the help they need, as 88% of trafficked victims encounter a health care worker while being trafficked. Unfortunately, victims don't usually self-identify that they are being trafficked and the situations they face can vary dramatically. It is imperative to remember that traditional red flags are not always present in the pediatric population. Risk factors and red flags with their history and physical exam are one of the best indicators that health care providers need to be vigilant in looking at. There are numerous barriers for disclosure in the healthcare setting. Periods of time before and after disclosure are often emotionally difficult and could be dangerous for the victim. It is extremely important to have a plan in place for intervention if the victim does disclose trafficking. A trauma informed approach to medical and mental health interventions, that focus on safety, are vital in this population. This is happening where you live and you can make a difference in their lives.

Keywords : human trafficking, public health, emergency medicine, sexual health

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