Human Trafficking 2.0: Awareness, Assessment & Assistance Beyond the Emergency Care Center

Laura Derr, MSN, RN, CEN

BACKGROUND

- Human Trafficking (HT) is the illegal trade of human beings, mainly for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation & forced labor. It is modern day slavery.
- HT is a global concern affecting individuals, families & entire communities.
- Estimates indicate that more than 200 million people are affected worldwide.
- Large numbers of victims seek medical care, often in emergency departments; many are not identified as HT victims.
- Lack of knowledge of indicators allows potential victims not to be recognized by healthcare workers.
- Sensitive & culturally sympathetic questioning may break the silence and afford the victim the opportunity for rescue.

PURPOSE

- To expand the education provided in Phase 1 to targeted departments (e.g. Emergency Care Center [ECC] registration, Security, Case Management).
- To coordinate with Women’s Services staff providing education to their departments.
- To provide resources for staff and victims.
- Continue to provide resources and education to ECC staff.

REFERENCES

Available upon request: Laura.Derr@stjoe.org

METHODS

- Design: Evidence-based project
- Pre-test staff from targeted departments as an educational ‘needs assessment’.
- Education included:
  - “Red Flags”
  - Reporting & documenting
  - Resources – ECC & outside agencies
  - Human Trafficking Algorithm (SJO PC-104)
  - HT Awareness buttons attached to Staff ID
- Post-test to assess learning.
- Signs containing pull-off tabs with National HT Hotline number in various locations for victims (English, Spanish & Vietnamese).
- Coordinated education with Women’s Services departments ensuring consistent practice.

RESULTS

- Staff education and use of the treatment algorithm were an effective strategy to improve recognition of HT victims.
- Radiology staff identified possible victim following education.

RESULTS (continued)

DISCUSSION

- Pull tabs removed from many signs – no method of tracking if victims contacted Hotline.
- Current EHR abuse documentation based on positive responses which may not be recognized by caregiver unless disclosed by patient.
- Literature does not report on education of Environmental Services (EVS) staff. Our education to EVS:
  - Conducted in English and Spanish.
  - Yielded much interest and many questions regarding definitions and reporting.

CONCLUSION

- Health care encounters provide an opportunity to identify and respond to the needs of exploited individuals.
- Frequent training is required to maintain the skills necessary to identify and assist potential Human Trafficking victims.
- Training staff throughout the hospital should be considered to increase identification of victims.