Assessing healthcare provider knowledge of human trafficking.

Nicole E. McAmis, BS¹, Angela C. Mirabella, BA¹, Elizabeth M. McCarthy, BS¹, Cara A. Cama, MBA¹, Miklos C. Fogarasi, MD¹, Listy A. Thomas, MD, FACEP¹, Richard S. Feinn, PhD², Ivelisse Rivera-Godreau, MD¹
¹Frank H. Netter MD School of Medicine, Quinnipiac University

Background
Healthcare providers are one of the few groups of professionals who are likely to interact with victims of human trafficking. [1,2]
- An average of 28-50% of victims had come into contact with the healthcare system at least once during captivity [1,4].
- Up to 88% of trafficked victims seek medical care from emergency departments, neighborhood clinics, Planned Parenthood clinics, and private practices. [5]
- Common complaints include infectious diseases, trauma or injury from physical violence, sexual abuse, malnutrition, dental disease, PTSD, anxiety, depression, or substance use disorders [5,6,7].
- Many victims may not be recognized due to lack of knowledge by healthcare providers, the control of the victim’s visit by a trafficker, the fear or shame the victim may experience, the social or cultural alienation, and others [4,6].
- Healthcare providers can help in the fight against modern-day slavery by screening, identifying, intervening, and making a plan of action to help victims [5,6].

Materials & Methods

Survey Development
As there are no established validated surveys examining knowledge of human trafficking among healthcare providers, a survey was developed through an iterative process, including discussions with colleagues and members of the study team.

Survey Items:
- Q1-Q3: demographic information
- Q4: Have you received training in identifying victims of human trafficking? (Y/N)
- Q5: Are you aware of the statistics on human trafficking? (Y/N)
- Q6: How would you rank your knowledge in identifying a trafficked individual?
- Q7: How would you rank your knowledge in the following?
- Q8: Do you feel that you would benefit from human trafficking training? (Y/N)
- Q9: Additional commentary.

Table 1. Knowledge items assessed regarding human trafficking.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of survey participants.

Table 3. Responses to human trafficking training questions.

Results
Total Number of Survey Responses = 6,603

Table 4. Mean (95% CI) knowledge score by age range, region, and level of training.

Results, continued

Commentary

Total Number of Commentary Responses = 949 (14.4%)

Themes:
- Survey: raising awareness, need to refresh knowledge
- Survey design: use of the word “average,” limited number of specific degrees
- Prior knowledge/training: lectures, organization conferences, further certification (SANIE)
- Mandated training: required to maintain licensing
- Specialty specific: not necessary dependent on patient population or location
- Ideal training: actionable items, concrete skills building, longitudinal training
- Request for further training: integrate training into graduate programs, mandate training in all aspects of healthcare

Conclusions
- The majority of the over 6,600 participants from various levels of training believed that they would benefit from human trafficking training with less than 50% having previous training
- Participants in the age group from 61-70 were found to have the highest level of knowledge when compared to age groups above and below those numbers
- Knowledge was highest in the Midwest with the South, West, and Northeast following closely behind
- Amongst all the training levels, social workers were noted to have the highest knowledge level followed closely by nurse practitioners
- Across all knowledge questions, the mean rank for each question was below the scale midpoint of 3 with an average knowledge score across all respondents as 2.64
- This indicates the need and potential benefit for human trafficking training across all levels of training in the healthcare field

References

Contact Information
Nicole E. McAmis
nicole.mcamis@quinnipiac.edu