



# Assessment of Human Trafficking Awareness



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## Background

Human trafficking, modern day slavery, is thriving on a global scale (Peters, 2013). INTERPOL, the world's largest police organization reported that human trafficking is a multi-billion dollar enterprise (Smith, 2016). "According to Interpol, smuggling people is now the third most profitable activity for organized crime worldwide" (Smith, 2016, p. 34). The Federal Bureau of Investigation in the United States reported that human trafficking may be the "third largest criminal activity in the world" (FBI, 2016). The Ohio Department of Health reported that human trafficking is one of the fastest growing criminal industries in the world (2016). Literature identified nurses and other healthcare workers in working in emergency departments, physician offices, and urgent care centers as being positioned to identify and rescue victims of human trafficking (Peters, 2013). Currently there is limited if any content that included in curriculum in medicine and nursing to inform these healthcare providers about how to identify victims of human trafficking and then how to effectively access or provide support for victims of human trafficking.

## Purpose

This study was conducted to assess Toledo, Ohio area emergency department nurses and physician knowledge of: indicators of human trafficking and resources to help victims of human trafficking. The study design also provided education to participants regarding: indicators of human trafficking and available resources to help victims.

## Methods

This quantitative study was approved by The University of Toledo Social & Behavioral Science Institutional Review Board; also approved by the Mercy Health Systems and ProMedica Health Systems Institutional Review Boards. A convenience sample of employees working in the nine Toledo, Ohio area emergency departments on the day scheduled for data collection who provided informed consent were provided a Human Trafficking Awareness Survey for self-administration. Survey data was entered into SPSS 23 and frequencies tables of were run on recognition of indicators of human trafficking, demographics of participants, and awareness of resources to rescue.

## Data Collection

The *Human Trafficking Awareness Survey* (HTAS) a one-page instrument (front and back) was developed from a review of literature from 2004-2014 using key words: human trafficking, emergency departments, assessment, signs, symptoms, healthcare providers, sex trafficking, trafficking, minors, knowledge, and protocol. HTAS included 14-items, six demographic items and eight items specific to human trafficking, and took approximately ten minutes to complete.

## Results

Table 1.1 through Table 1.10 demonstrate that indicators of human trafficking are fairly well known by emergency department personnel in the Toledo, Ohio area, although inconsistency in recognition of some of the indicators of human trafficking was noted.

## Signs of Human Trafficking Frequency Tables

Table 1.1 Person with client answers questions for client.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	25	25.8	25.8	25.8
	Yes	72	74.2	74.2	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table 1.2 Person with client will not leave client's side.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	18	18.6	18.6	18.6
	Yes	79	81.4	81.4	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table 1.3 Story is not congruent with clinical presentation.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	16	16.5	16.5	16.5
	Yes	81	83.5	83.5	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table 1.4 Not having possession of identity documents.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	23	23.7	23.7	23.7
	Yes	74	76.3	76.3	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table 1.5 Poor hygiene.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	46	47.4	47.4	47.4
	Yes	51	52.6	52.6	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table 1.6 Unable/unwilling to provide home address.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	27	27.8	27.8	27.8
	Yes	70	72.2	72.2	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table 1.7 Fearful, anxious, or uncooperative.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	22	22.7	22.7	22.7
	Yes	75	77.3	77.3	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table 1.8 Underage client.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	42	43.3	43.3	43.3
	Yes	55	56.7	56.7	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table 1.9 Client diagnosed with STD/STI.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	49	50.5	50.5	50.5
	Yes	48	49.5	49.5	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table 1.10 Flat Affect and Emotionless client

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	27	27.8	27.8	27.8
	Yes	70	72.2	72.2	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Also noted that 28.8% of participants felt confident that the institution they worked for had a procedure to help victims of human trafficking once identified, 4% believed there was not procedure, 64.9% were uncertain if there was a procedure, and two or 2% did not answer this item.

Table 2.1 identified that only 19.6% of participants learned about indicators of human trafficking in school as part of the curriculum.

Table 2.1 Where did you first hear about human trafficking? In school, as part of the curriculum

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	78	80.4	80.4	80.4
	Yes	19	19.6	19.6	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

## Conclusion

Human trafficking is modern day slavery and a multi-million dollar global industry. Emergency department nurses and physicians are positioned to identify, rescue, and help these victims. Unfortunately, not all nurses and physicians working in emergency departments are educated to enable them to identify and help victims of human trafficking.

## Recommendations

The results of this study support a need to further education and including inclusion in curricular plans in healthcare provider programs. This study assessed the knowledge level of nurses and physicians working in Toledo, Ohio area emergency departments about indicators of and available resources to help rescue victims of human trafficking. It also was instrumental in providing education to these professional about indicators of human trafficking and available resources to rescue and help these victims. The benefits of this work is self-evident. If one more person is identified, rescued, and helped than it was a meaningful work.