



# Red Light

## A Review of Interventions for Detecting Victims of Human Trafficking in U.S. Healthcare Facilities

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Global Public Health - University of Virginia – Spring 2024



### Introduction

Human trafficking is the world’s fastest growing criminal industry. It’s estimated that 27.6 million people worldwide are currently victims of human trafficking, making it a serious global public health problem. In the U.S., up to 85% of victims of human trafficking visit a healthcare provider during their captivity without ever being detected. This systematic review capstone project aims to uncover the interventions that exist in healthcare settings across the U.S. to identify victims of human trafficking in order to understand the general picture of the U.S. healthcare systems’ response to human trafficking.



### Results

Twelve empirical studies ultimately met the inclusion criteria and were synthesized for this review.

#### Study characteristics

The following four themes were identified as notable variations in characteristics of interventions and their impact:

##### 1. Intervention method

Varying types of intervention:

- ❖ Surveys (9)
  - Written, verbal, or online
  - Positive screening qualifications
- ❖ Electronic screening tools (1)
- ❖ Medical record examinations (1)
- ❖ Educational programs (1)

##### 2. Type of healthcare facility

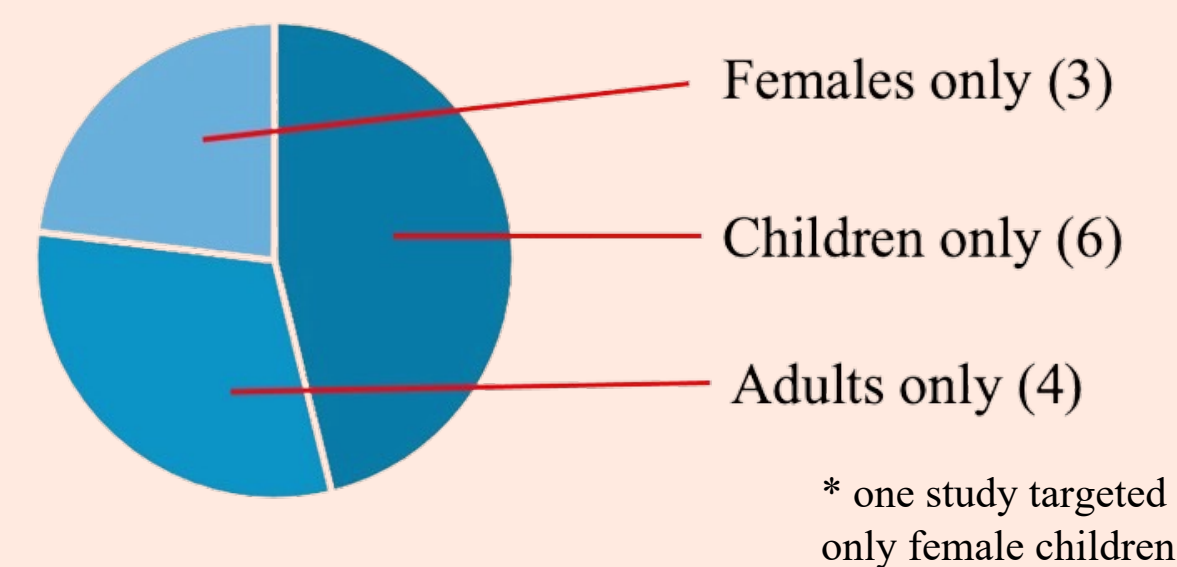
- ❖ Majority of studies occurred in emergency departments (Eds)
- ❖ Variation in provider of intervention

##### 3. Intervention outcomes

- ❖ Studies varied in their number of positive screens and number of ultimately confirmed victims
- ❖ Only some studies used validation measurements

#### Sample characteristics

A main variation among the studies’ samples were the types of patients they addressed:



##### 4. Topics assessed by the intervention

Author	Physical/sexual violence	Sexual history	History/presence of STIs	Substance use	Mental health	Family life	Coercion, secrecy, lying	History of law enforcement involvement
Chang		x	x				x	
Chisolm-Straker	x						x	x
Duke	x	x	x		x		x	
Grace								
Greenbaum	x	x	x			x		x
Greenbaum	x	x	x	x		x	x	x
Hurst	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
Kalitso	x	x	x	x		x		x
Kalitso	x	x					x	
McDow	x	x	x				x	
Mumma	x	x					x	
Peterson	x	x		x	x	x		

### Research question

*What are the characteristics of existing interventions that have been developed for detecting victims of human trafficking in healthcare facilities in the US and what is their demonstrated impact?*

### Methods

A modified systematic literature review was conducted by searching for articles including key search terms through the databases PubMed, ClinicalKey, Embase, EBSCOHost, Web of Science, and JSTOR and then applying inclusion and exclusion criteria. A data extraction table was created to synthesize the literature.

Study name	Intervention method	Healthcare facility	Sample size	Number of positive screens	Number of confirmed victims	Sensitivity	Specificity
Chang et. al, 2015	MR examination	Teen clinic	621	177	13		
Chisolm-Straker, 2021	Survey	ED	4,127	36		100%	61%
Duke et. al, 2023	MR examination	Hospital	1,763	184			
Grace et. al, 2014	Educational program	ED					
Greenbaum, Livings, et al., 2018	Survey	Pediatric ED	810		90	84.40%	57.50%
Greenbaum, Dodd, et al., 2018	Survey	Pediatric ED	108			92%	73%
Hurst et. al, 2021	Survey	Pediatric ED	212	26		84.60%	53.20%
Kalitso et. al, 2018	Survey	Pediatric ED	203	100	11	90.90%	53.10%
Kalitso et. al, 2021	Survey	ED	26,974	189	42		
McDow and Dols, 2021	Survey	Pregnancy crisis clinic	304	14	5		
Mumma et. al, 2017	Survey	ED	143	39	10	100%	78%
Peterson et. al, 2022	Survey	Pediatric ED	4,354	1,759	18		

### Discussion

There is a lack of consistency among the few existing interventions:

- ❖ the vast majority were surveys but were administered in varying ways
- ❖ they occurred in various types of healthcare settings
- ❖ they addressed varying risk factor topics for human trafficking
- ❖ most were not analyzed for validation measurements, but the ones that were tended to be prone to false positives

The findings indicate that the healthcare sector shows potential for being an effective setting for illuminating victims and connecting them with services, but further research and attention is necessary to strengthen identification. Most importantly, human trafficking is a serious problem for global public health, justice, and security that necessitates more advanced research efforts and recognition.

### Recommendations

- ❖ Researchers should consider conducting studies implementing previously validated interventions in healthcare settings to generate more research on already existing resources
- ❖ Developers of such interventions should gain insight from problem spaces that also aim to sneak through barriers of patients disclosing vulnerable personal and potentially convicting information (e.g. CRAFFT)
- ❖ Future research should aim to address populations known to be more vulnerable to human trafficking, specifically migrant populations
- ❖ Efforts should be made towards greater collaboration with mental health resources and personnel, immigration services, and law enforcement.

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my capstone advisor Dr. Rupa Valdez for her helpful and unwavering guidance throughout this project, as well as the entire GPH faculty for shaping and strengthening me throughout my academic journey.

### References

