

HCPs lack knowledge and awareness of sex trafficking

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(HealthDay)—Health care providers demonstrate significant knowledge gaps regarding sex trafficking (ST), according to research published online March 16 in *Pediatrics*.

Megan E. Beck, from the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, and colleagues surveyed physicians, nurses, physician assistants, social workers, and patients and family advocates to assess [knowledge gaps](#) and training needs relating to ST. One hundred sixty-eight participants from multiple hospitals and medical clinics responded to the survey.

The researchers found that 48 percent of participants correctly classified a minor as an ST victim and 42 percent correctly differentiated an ST victim from a child abuse victim in two clinical vignettes. Nearly two-

thirds (63 percent) of respondents reported not having received training on how to identify ST victims. Participants who had received training were more likely to report ST as a major problem locally, to have encountered a victim, and to have more confidence in their ability to identify victims (all $P \leq 0.001$). Lack of training and awareness of ST were identified as the greatest barriers to identification of victims (34 and 22 percent, respectively).

"Health care providers demonstrate gaps in knowledge and awareness of ST, specifically of pediatric victims, that correlate with their limited experience and training," the authors write. "Training is crucial to improve identification of these victims and provide appropriate care for their specific needs."

More information: [Abstract](#)
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