Human trafficking – are we ignoring modern-day slavery?

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Abstract

Objectives: Review available literature regarding Human Trafficking in Europe.

Methods: Non systematic review using PubMed database with the MeSH word “Human Trafficking”. Review of the relevant international publications regarding “Human Trafficking”.

Results: PubMed database found 46 results from which 10 were found relevant. Four international publications regarding the subject available online were also considered relevant.

Discussion: Although it is estimated that there are at least 2.4 million victims of human trafficking worldwide there is few available literature about this subject. According to the European Commission the number of people trafficked to or within the European Union amounts to several hundred thousands a year. The number of reported cases in 2012 was 10998, most of them are adults and about 80 percent are female. In Europe the most frequent purpose for human trafficking is sexual exploitation (69%) followed by labour exploitation (19%). The majority of them are European citizens. Healthcare professionals are not aware of this nor have been trained to recognize these victims and as a consequence, opportunities to identify this cases are missed.

Conclusions: Further research is needed to understand the causes, consequences and scope of human trafficking. Health care providers play a major role in identifying these victims. Educational programs concerning this subject should be offered to increase awareness, promote early detection and assure effective management of modern-day slavery.