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Sex Trafficking of Minors in the U.S.: Implications for Policy, Prevention and Research

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Sex Trafficking of Minors
in the U.S.:
Implications for Policy, Prevention
and Research

Kim Kotrla, Ph.D., LCSW

Goals of Session

- Present findings from analysis of 115 cases of minor sex trafficking involving 153 victims
- Discuss implications for policy, practice and prevention

Summary and Purpose of Study

- At least 100,000 U.S. minors trafficked with up to 325,000 more at risk
- Growing awareness about issue
- Limited data about victims themselves
- Present study an attempt to learn more about characteristics of minors trafficked in U.S. for commercial sexual exploitation
- Implications for policy and practice

Methodology

- Cases identified through 2 venues:
 - Review of DOJ press releases
 - Online search
- October 28, 2000 – October 31, 2009
- “child trafficking”, “domestic minor sex trafficking”, “child prostitution”

Methodology

- Inclusion criteria:
 - Involve victim under age 18
 - Occur in the U.S.
 - At least one perpetrator had to have been arrested, indicted, or convicted
 - Same criteria used by Kyckelhahn et al in analyzing data on human trafficking investigations from federally-funded task forces

Variables Extracted

- Year case identified
- Number of victims
- Number of perpetrators
- Gender of perpetrators
- Status of traffickers
- Gender of victims
- Age of victims upon
- Ethnicity of victims
- Victims' country of origin
- State where found
- #/type of commercial sex acts in which exploited
- Length in situation
- Runaway status
- Whether had been advertised on Internet

Results

- 115 separate incidents located
 - 63 (54.8%) through online search
 - 52 (45.2%) through DOJ press releases
- At least 153 victims involved
- 215 perpetrators
 - 152 (70.7%) male; 63 (29.3%) female
 - 117 (53.4%) convicted, 70 (32.0%) indicted, 32 (14.6%) arrested

Results

Year of Incident	%	N = 115
2001	1.7	2
2003	2.6	3
2004	5.2	6
2005	3.5	4
2006	4.3	5
2007	16.5	19
2008	21.7	25
<u>2009</u>	<u>44.3</u>	<u>51</u>
Total	100.0	115

Results

Number of Cases per Incident	%	N = 120
1	42.5	51
2	20.8	25
3	6.7	8
4	1.7	2
5	0.8	1
6	0.8	1
9	0.8	1
<u>Multiple victims</u>	<u>25.8</u>	<u>31</u>
Total	100.0	120

Results

Age upon Rescue	%	N = 153
5 years	0.7	1
12 years	2.6	4
13 years	5.2	8
14 years	11.1	17
15 years	8.5	13
16 years	18.3	28
17 years	12.4	19
<u>Unknown</u>	<u>41.2</u>	<u>63</u>
Total	100.0	153

Results

Runaway Status	%	N = 153
Yes	11.8	18
No	20.3	31
<u>Unknown</u>	<u>68.0</u>	<u>104</u>
Total	100.0*	153
Country of Origin	%	N = 153
U.S	38.6	59
Other country	20.9	32
<u>Unknown</u>	<u>40.5</u>	<u>62</u>
Total	100.0	153

Results

Longevity in captivity	%	N = 153
< 6 months	20.9	32
6 months – 1 year	3.9	6
1 – 1 1/2 years	5.9	9
1 1/2 - 2 years	5.2	8
2-3 years	1.3	2
3 – 4 years	2.0	3
4 – 5 years	4.6	7
<u>Unknown</u>	<u>56.2</u>	<u>86</u>
Total	100.0	153

Results

Method of recruitment	%	N = 153
False promise	16.3	25
Kidnapped	9.8	15
Boyfriend	3.9	6
Coercion	3.3	5
Online	2.6	4
Family member	2.9	3
Originally smuggled	0.6	1
<u>Missing</u>	<u>61.4</u>	<u>94</u>
Total	100.0	153

Results

Number of activities in which minor exploited	%	N = 153
One	60.8	94
Two	22.2	34
Three	13.1	20
Four	2.0	3
<u>Unknown</u>	<u>2.0</u>	3
Total	100.0	153

Results

How exploited	%	N
Prostitution	94.1	144
Pornography	17.6	27
Stripping	6.5	10
Escort services	8.5	13
Internet posting	24.8	38

Results



Limitations

- Relatively small n
- Substantial missing data
- Not all cases identified

Implications

- Need for safe harbor laws
- Need for mandated training and public awareness campaigns
- Need to address online advertising

Implications

- Need for improved services to victims
- Need to address demand
- Need for expanded prevention efforts