



Checklist for healthcare professionals to identify a potential victim of sex trafficking with some red flags. Test your Knowledge!

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## HISTORY RED FLAGS

- Has a much older boyfriend if a minor?
- Accompanied by a controlling family member or boyfriend who does all the talking?
- Dressed inappropriately for the weather? Has multiple cell phones? A large amount of cash? Pays the bill in cash. Expensive clothes, purses, jewelry?
- Truant? Missing class, grades dropping, behavior change?
- Does not have an ID or passport or possesses a fake ID? Does not know the address?
- Uses trafficking vocabulary; “The game,” “Daddy,” “John,” “The Track,” “The Circuit?”

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## PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT RED FLAGS

- ENT:**
  - Neck pain from frequent, forced oral sex?
  - Petechia to the throat or palate can be a result of frequent, forced oral sex?
  - Broken or missing teeth? Tooth decay?
- Obstetrics and Gynecology (OB/GYN):**
  - Sexually transmitted infection in a minor? Frequent PID?
  - Vaginal tearing, vaginal trauma, profuse bleeding?
  - Numerous sexual partners? Much older boyfriend?
  - Repeated unplanned pregnancies, numerous abortions?
  - Delayed care for a ruptured ectopic? No, follow up BHCG or US?
  - Retained foreign bodies or debris in the vaginal vault (traffickers pack the vagina while on their menstrual cycle) or a “lost tampon” in the vagina (Tracy, et.al., 2012)?
  - Anogenital trauma? (Sabella, 2011).
  - Sexually explicit tattoos near or on the genitalia (mons pubis, sacrum/buttocks)? Imply advertisement of a product and violate common sense as to why would put that on their body?
  - Frequent UTI in a minor (controversial)?
  - Prenatal Care?
- Musculoskeletal:**
  - Low back pain from being forced to walk the streets in high heels (acf.hhs.gov, SOAR)?
  - Chronic back pain with no organic cause?
  - Bruising on the back, buttocks, posterior thighs, posterior calves, posterior neck?

- Tattoos that imply ownership; e.g., crown with initials, dollar sign, bar code?

□ **Gastrointestinal:**

- Irritable bowel Syndrome (IBS), heartburn, abdomen pain with no organic cause (functional GI symptoms), a retained foreign body in the anus, anogenital trauma?

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## SIGNS OF TORTURE/ABUSE

- Bruising or trauma to the posterior aspect of the neck (hard to injure this area and typically non-accidental)?
- Injuries to both sides of the body? Injuries with particular patterns?
- Petechia to the throat or palate can mean frequent oral sex. Petechial to the conjunctiva and around eyes can signal a strangulation injury?
- Delays in presentation, medical care? Untreated injuries; e.g., wound that should have been closed with sutures and is now infected? Infected puncture wound /cellulitis from intravenous drug use?
- Injuries to the ears? Both ears? Pinch Marks?
- Abrasions over bony prominences? Scratches or linear abrasions from a wire?
- Small discoid or ovoid bruising in clusters may represent when a person has been forcibly gripped. Sites are inner thighs in a sexual assault, face and trunk in children, neck, and arms (Forensic Medicine for Medical Students)?
- Elongated, broad-type abrasions (ropes may leave an area of bruising mixed with abrasions)?
- Bruising, abrasions, lacerations to the chest, back, neck, or buttocks? “Road Rash” to the extremities from being thrown out of or drug by a vehicle?
- Belts or cords may have loop marks, parallel lines of petechial with central sparing. Patterned bruising may be from a belt buckle?
- Tramline bruising, two parallel lines of bruising, can result from being beaten with a heavy stick, baseball bat or baton (Tsokos, 2015)?
- Cigarette burns tend to be circular with a 1 cm diameter, come in clusters, and can fade in a few hours or a few days. Burns, in general, tend to take the shape of the object that inflicted the burn?

References:

- **Tracy, Erin E., MD, MPH; Konstantopoulos, Wendy Macias, MD, MPH, Human Trafficking: A Call for Heightened Awareness and Advocacy by Obstetrician-Gynecologists Obstetrics & Gynecology: May 2012 - Volume 119 - Issue 5 - p 1045-1047. DOI: 10.1097/AOG.0b013e31824f9aaa**
- <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/archive/otip/resource/soarhealthcare>
- **Sabella, D. (2011). The role of the nurse in combating human trafficking. *The American journal of nursing*, 111 2, 28-37; quiz 38-9.**
- <http://www.forensicmed.co.uk/wounds/blunt-force-trauma/bruises/>
- **Source: Tsokos, M. Forensic Sci Med Pathol (2015) 11: 235. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12024-015-9671-y>**

