

Human Trafficking Fact Sheet

Victims

Based on multiple studies, *the average age of entry into the sex industry for victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) is between 12-16 years of age.* This range includes studies that found victims begin getting trafficked between ages 12-14 (Estes & Weiner, 2001), 13-14 (Barnitz, 2001), 14 years old (Silbert & Pines, 1982), and 15 years of age (Shannon et al, 2009).

An estimated 244,000-300,000 children are at risk for commercial sexual exploitation. This number is *in addition to* the estimated 105,000 children that are already substantiated or indicated to be victims of child sex abuse annually within the U.S. (Estes & Weiner, 2001) One study extrapolates the number of youth at risk of CSEC out to 650,000 nationwide. (Edwards et al., 2006)

The Oregon Human Trafficking Task Force and law enforcement agencies in Multnomah County are currently gathering data and working closely with related agencies to track the number of victims and shed further light on human trafficking in our community.

The U.S. Department of Justice estimates **almost two-thirds of domestic sex trafficking victims are U.S. citizens.** (U.S. DOJ, 2009)

Based on interviews with 210 CSEC victims, **almost two-thirds of them were Caucasian and the families of origin were mostly working- and middle-class (76%) rather than poor (24%).** (Estes & Weiner, 2001)

Estes & Weiner (2001) found that in the United States, more often than poverty, the **primary causes of CSEC are:**

- **Family dysfunction**
- **Family sexual assaults**
- **Family or personal drug dependence, or**
- **School or other social failures**

60-80% of prostituted persons were sexually abused as children, 57-75% were physically abused. (Shively et al., 2010)

In another study, the **presence of existing adult prostitution markets, and drug dependency by self or family members** are cited by victims as leading factors contributing to their involvement in CSEC. (Small et al., 2008)

An estimated 1 in 12 children and youth nationally have experienced sexual victimization. **Approximately 97% of children and youth with any sexual victimization will experience future victimization.** (Finkelhor et al., 2005) **The odds of survival sex are significantly increased for youths who have been previously victimized.** (Greene et al, 1999) Sexual abuse is the most common reason for children running away from home – *these are the youth most at-risk for becoming victims of CSEC.*

A study in New York found that young people are **solicited for sex in exchange for money, food or shelter within an average of 36-48 hours** of being on the streets. (Spangenberg, 2001) A similar study in Minnesota found most youths are approached for sex within 48 hours. (Cited in Shively et al., 2010)

A study of 2000 prostituted women over a 30 year period found that their **mortality rates were 200 times greater** than those of women with similar demographic profiles. (Shively et al., 2010)

Prostituted persons have a homicide rate 17 times higher than the rate for age-matched females in the general population. (Shively et al., 2010) Another U.S. study noted that **“no population of women studied previously has had a percentage of murder even approximating those in this sample”**. (Farley, 2004)

Women who have been prostituted face increased violence and abuse:

- 82% have been physically assaulted (Farley et al., 2003)
- 78% have been threatened with a weapon (Farley et al., 2003)
- 84% have experienced homelessness (Farley et al., 2003)
- 47-57% have been kidnapped
- 73-92% have been raped, and 59% of this group has been raped more than five times (Shively et al., 2010)
- Shively et al. (2010) also note that sexual assaults against those in prostitution were more physically violent and more frequently involved weapons.

These statistics are alarming for anyone to be forced to experience on a daily basis, but please remember the average age of entry for human trafficking victims is as young as 12 years old – on average these are 7th-10th grade children when they begin getting trafficked.

Victims report being **beaten by their pimp two or more times per week**, but especially when they fail to achieve their financial quota or demand to keep a larger share of money received. (Estes & Weiner, 2001)

Pimps take an estimated 60-70% of money collected. (Scott, 2002)

In a five-country study, including the U.S., **67% of prostituted women met criteria for a diagnosis for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**. The U.S. sample had a diagnosis rate of 68%. (Farley et al., 1998)

For comparison, here are the rates of PTSD diagnosis among other traumatized populations:

- 22% of women who were victims of sexual assault met criteria for PTSD. (Green et al., 1998)
- Military combat veterans showed a 24% overall PTSD rate. (Blake et al., 1990) Only 8% of combat veterans from the Somalia peace-keeping efforts met PTSD criteria. (Litz et al., 1997)
- Terrorist attack survivors met PTSD criteria at a 37% rate. (Shalev & Freedman, 2005)

- Motor vehicle accident survivors at the hospital met PTSD criteria 18%. (Shalev & Freedman, 2005)
- Up to 5% of breast cancer survivors met PTSD criteria. (Green et al, 1998)

Besides PTSD, Molnar et al. (1998) found that other impacts on CSEC victims include:

- Increased rate of teen pregnancy
- Increased rates of substance abuse (86% higher rates)
- Increased rates of mood disorders – primarily depression and anxiety disorders (207% of the general population)
- Increased rates of HIV and STDs – Shively et al. (2010) found that 20% of prostituted women reported that they had sexually transmitted diseases, and less than half had had a health screening the prior year despite an average of 17 different partners each week.
- Increased rates of suicide. One study reviewed noted female youth who had been sexually abused before leaving home were 3.2 times as likely to attempt suicide, and males were 4.3 times as likely. (Molnar et al., 1998)

Addressing the Demand Side

Human trafficking can only exist if there are people funding it. Unfortunately there are men throughout the country (and worldwide), often termed “johns”, who purchase sex from victims as young as twelve years old. Whether it is on the curb, over the internet, at a massage parlor or dance club, or out of a residence, adults in our community are creating demand and driving the victimization of children and modern day slavery.

Like trafficking victims, the “buyers” are difficult to gather data on. The limited research that does exist about this population provides some insight into who they are and how they promote this criminal industry.

Shively et al. (2010) found that one in every 5 or 6 men in the U.S. admits to having purchased sex at some point.

- Men in this group were more likely to have attended college than the general population.
- They were only 15% less likely to be married than the general population. (41% of arrested “johns” in the study were married)
- This group was similar demographically to the rest of the population on education, employment, and a limited criminal history.

Half of the men in an Atlanta, GA sting said “yes” to wanting a girl “under 18”. (Schapiro Group, 2010) In this study, 42% of the men came from “outside the urban core”.

An international study found that 22% of johns preferred girls under the age of 18. These men imagined “*that the girls would be capable of consent and not harmed by the sex acts.*” (Hughes, 2004)

Again, remember the average CSEC victims first get trafficked and consider whether 12-16 year old children are “capable of consent and not harmed by the sex acts” of a man two or three times their age.

John School Diversion Program

In January, 2011, Multnomah County began a John School diversion program. The program is a cooperative effort with the District Attorney’s Office, the Police, Health Department and survivors. Modeled after successful ones in Seattle and San Francisco, Portland’s john school will be financially self sustaining through fees paid the attendees and will also support law enforcement efforts and survivor services.

San Francisco’s First Offender Prostitution Program (FOPP) has:

- Operated under the same structure for over 12 years
- **Maintained a strong revenue stream from fees paid by participants**
- **Measured a sharp drop in recidivism rates the first year, which were sustained for the next decade** (about 1% compared to the 33% recidivism rate for all misdemeanor offenders). (Shively et al., 2008)

San Diego’s john school has **measured a 50% reduction in its recidivism rate** among prostitution offenders. (Shively et al., 2008)

Toronto’s john school found that **offenders reported increased acknowledgement of guilt, awareness of laws, consideration of possible sexual addictions, and increased awareness of victims and related consequences.** (Wortley et al., 2002)

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