

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND MENTAL HEALTH

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Introduction: A recent systematic review found a high prevalence of violence and mental distress among women trafficked for sexual exploitation; no data were identified for trafficked men and children.

Objectives: To describe the clinical characteristics of trafficked people in contact with a large inner city mental health service compared with a non-trafficked cohort.

Aims: To investigate whether, compared with a non-trafficked cohort, trafficked people would be significantly more likely to have co-morbid disorders and have significantly smaller improvements in functioning at the end of an episode of care.

Methods: Study population: mental health service users who had been trafficked for exploitation and a non-trafficked service user cohort matched for gender and age. Data source: The South London and Maudsley NHS Trust (SLaM) Biomedical Research Centre Case Register Interactive Search (CRIS) database of anonymised full patient records (2006-2012).

Results: We identified case records of 135 people who had been trafficked. 104 (77%) were female; age at first SLaM contact ranged from 8 to 49 years (mean 23.6, SD 8.0). 38 (28%) of the trafficked service users received psychiatric care from an emergency department. Depression (28.1%, n=38), PTSD (19.3%, n=26), non-affective psychoses (12.6%, n=17) were the most frequently recorded diagnoses among trafficked service users. Further analysis is in progress and scheduled for completion by March 2013.

Conclusions: Significant numbers of trafficked people were seen in an inner-city mental health service; services therefore need to understand their complex needs.