Abstract

Human trafficking is a phenomenon that has now been documented in most regions in the world. Although trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation is the most commonly recognised form of trafficking, it is widely acknowledged that human trafficking also involves men, women and children who are trafficked for various forms of labour exploitation and into other abusive circumstances. Despite the violence and harm inherent in most trafficking situations, there remains extremely little evidence on the individual and public health implications of any form of human trafficking. The Brazilian government has recently launched a national plan to combat human trafficking. However, because the health risks associated with human trafficking have not been well-recognised or documented, there is extremely limited reliable data on the health needs of trafficked persons to inform policy and practices. Brazilian policy-makers and service providers should be encouraged to learn about the likely range of health impacts of trafficking, and incorporate this into antitrafficking protection and response strategies. As well as prevention activities, the government, international and local organisations should work together with the public health research community to study the health needs of trafficked persons and explore opportunities to provide safe and appropriate services to victims in need of care.

Keywords