

Victim of human trafficking in healthcare

Recognise the signs and act

Professionals do not need to know whether a patient is specifically a victim of human trafficking. It is more important to recognise indicators of exploitation more extensively and to ensure that the patient receives the help they need.



Recognise the red flags

- The repeated presence of an escort or if an escort continuously acts on behalf of the patient
- Repeated on-call visits or cancellations
- Lacking health information, unexplained injuries or scars, repeated accidents
- Untreated chronic diseases, repeated infections or sexually transmitted diseases
- Unwanted pregnancy or non-monitored pregnancy
- Substance abuse
- Looking unwell and untreated, fatigue, a frightened demeanour, poor nutrition
- Clothing that is unsuitable for the weather
- Difficulty being at ease while treated



Speak up about your concerns

Always raise your concerns in situations where only the patient is present. Be calm – this creates a sense of safety for the patient. Raise your concerns and ask open questions about the patient's situation. The patient may not necessarily recognise that they have been abused.



Ensure safety

If necessary, bring a colleague with you and contact a guard or the police.

Do not share information with anyone escorting the patient. Assess whether it is safe to allow the patient to leave the appointment. Use a reliable interpreter or translation application. In some situations, it may be safer for the patient to use a language other than his or her own mother tongue.



Secure further measures

Make an effort to work together with social services. When possible, ask a social worker to work as a partner. If necessary, submit a notification of concern and/or a child welfare notification, and contact the social and crisis emergency services or the police. If the patient leaves in the middle of treatment, submit a notification of concern. If further discussion is not possible, provide the patient's contact details to the parties providing assistance. Record information that is sufficient for further services, taking the patient's safety into account.



Work together with others

You can consult the National Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking, organisations specialising in helping victims of human trafficking or social welfare at a low threshold.