



**JOURNAL of FORENSIC ODONTO-  
STOMATOLOGY**  
**VOLUME 31 Supplement 1 October 2013**  
**Abstract book IOFOS Conference 2013 Firenze**

**IDENTIFICATION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING  
VICTIMS IN DENTAL CARE SETTINGS**

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*The author declares to have no conflict of interest.*

*Trafficking in human beings (THB) is a modern form of slavery and is a well-known phenomenon throughout the European Union and beyond. After drug dealing and the weapons industry, human trafficking is the second largest criminal activity in the world today and it is a growing crime. Italy is a destination or transit country for men women and children who are subjected to force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of sexual exploitation or forced labor. The aim of governmental and non-governmental agencies (NGAs), which are either directly or indirectly involved in combating trafficking in human beings, is the identification and referral of victims of trafficking and also to encourage self referrals. Identification is the most important step to provide protection and assistance to victims of trafficking. Victims of human trafficking often have a variety of physical and mental health needs including psychological trauma, injuries from violence, head and neck trauma, sexually transmitted infections and other gynecological problems, dental/oral problems and have poor nutrition. Healthcare and dental settings may offer opportunities for the identification of trafficked victims.*

*The author's experience in the field of community dentistry is presented within. Volunteer dental services are offered to non-EU patients held in a centre for asylum seekers (CARA) (Centro Accoglienza Richiedenti Asilo) in Bari (Italy). Dental professionals and forensic odontologists can in fact, contribute to the identification, assistance and protection of trafficked persons, as well as offering forensic services to assist the police investigation in order to identify crimes and find the criminal organizations behind them.*

*In domestic violence and child abuse cases, there are ethical concerns involved in the identification and protection of the trafficked persons, and the need for interdisciplinary work between law enforcement officers, social care providers and health and forensic professionals. The author recommends adequate training be given in behavioral sciences and also an awareness of the cultural differences present in victims which may have a bearing on how the case is handled.*

**KEYWORDS:** Forensic Odontology, Human Trafficking, Dental Care Setting