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Trends in Exploitation

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# Trends in Exploitation

## Labor Trafficking and Organ Trafficking

CONFERENCE REVIEW BY HALINA FARDIN

**HUMAN  
TRAFFICKING**

# Have you ever suspected that the nanny who works next door might be a prisoner of labor trafficking?

**I**MA MATUL, trafficked from Indonesia to the U.S. at age 17, was exploited for three years before she reached out to a neighbor for help and refuge. Vanessa Lanza, Director of Partnerships for the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST), has said that this form of modern-day slavery continues to happen in our own backyards—many of us unaware of its existence. To raise the profile on this serious and very much ongoing practice, the Iris Cantor–UCLA Women’s Health Education and Resource Center, CAST, and the UCLA Center for the Study of Women cosponsored “Trends in Exploitation: Labor Trafficking and Organ Trafficking,” a conference on October 20, 2011 at UCLA. Janet Pregler, M.D., Director of the Iris Cantor–UCLA Women’s

Health Center, introduced the conference by discussing the methods of deception and coercion used to exploit those living in poverty.

According to Lanza, “there is a lot to learn about slavery globally by looking at slavery in our backyard, looking at the separate yet strikingly similar stories of the survivors who begin their journey in one country and end in another.” In her presentation titled “Human Trafficking: Modern-Day Slavery in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” Lanza introduced the scope of a significant part of the issue. Currently 12.3 million people are held in slavery around the world, with 56% being girls and women. Annually, 14,000 to 17,500 people are trafficked into the U.S. as part of the \$32 billion global business. She noted that the International

Labor Organization (ILO), a United Nations agency that shapes policies and programs promoting healthy work environments, estimates that 32% involve labor trafficking, with the balance the result of sex trafficking. Lanza also discussed the three elements of trafficking: process, means, and end. The process is the act of recruiting, harboring, or obtaining a person. The means include obtaining a person by force and coercion. The end is the outcome of trafficking, such as involuntary servitude, debt bondage, or slavery. In her conclusion, Lanza stated her belief that through media and policy advocacy the trend in labor exploitation can be slowly diminished.

Dr. Susie Baldwin, the Chief of Health Assessment and Epidemiology at the L.A. County

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Department of Public Health, analyzed the health outcomes of trafficking victims in her presentation, “Understanding the Health Needs of Trafficking Survivors.” In discussing a study she conducted on the overall health effects of trafficking, as well as victim identification in health care settings, she noted that survivors experience a broad range of physical, sexual, physiological, and spiritual abuse. Deprivation, labor exploitation, coerced use of drugs and alcohol, dangerous living and working conditions, and abuse are, as discussed by Dr. Baldwin, among the profound impacts in the short and long term on the health and well-being of victims and survivors. Mental health issues described by survivors include sleep disturbances (insomnia and nightmares), depression, anxiety, hypervigilance (strong reactions to sensory or other reminders of traumatic events), recurring/intrusive memories, post-traumatic stress disorder that can include somatization (underlying mental health problems manifesting in physical symptoms), and long-lasting psychological challenges. These health effects were reported by survivors of labor as well as sex trafficking.

Gabriel Danovitch, M.D., Professor of Medicine and Medical Director of the Kidney Transplant Program in the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, said that labor and organ trafficking share many common ethical issues. In his presentation, “The Declaration of Istanbul on Organ Trafficking and Transplant Tourism,” Dr.

Danovitch reviewed the history of living donor kidney transplantation. The first case was in 1954 and involved identical twins. Currently, most cases involve related and unrelated donors who are motivated by altruism and mutual caring. However, the lucrateness of the transplant business has led to venal exploitation of vulnerable populations. Current hot spots of living donor exploitation are India, Pakistan, Colombia, Egypt, and China, where executed prisoners have been and continue to be a source of “donations.” In the years since the promulgation of the Declaration of Istanbul in 2008, there have been significant improvements in donor protection in several countries, such as Colombia and the Philippines. Danovitch encouraged attendees to sign up as potential organ donors at the DMV and at [www.donatelife.org](http://www.donatelife.org). He highlighted Southern California’s “OneLegacy” program as an example of professionalism and high ethical standards for organ donation programs around the world.

Ima Matul, a member of CAST’s Survivor Caucus and National Survivor Network, shared her story. In her presentation, “From Victim of Trafficking to Powerful Agent of Change,” Matul told her story of being trafficked from Indonesia to the U.S. in 1997. Matul was brought in to work as a nanny and was promised \$150 a month. She was forced to work 15 to 20 hours a day and underwent physical and emotional abuse for three years. Because of Matul’s limited knowledge of the

English language and her fear, it took her years to find the courage to write a note asking for help and to give it to a neighbor. The neighbor contacted the authorities, who took Matul to a CAST shelter. As a trafficking survivor, she has been empowered through engaging in advocacy efforts.

CAST is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual human rights organization that has been nationally and internationally recognized for its dedication to the identification of victims, mobilization of all sectors of the community to identify and advocate against trafficking, and provision of help for victims. CAST provides comprehensive long-term services through a three-pronged empowerment approach, which includes Social Services, Legal Services, and Outreach and Training. The organization operates the first shelter in the nation dedicated to serving victims of trafficking, and established the first partnership of its kind with the Saban Free Clinic, a family clinic in Los Angeles that addresses the physical and mental health needs of trafficking victims. As the first organization in the country dedicated exclusively to serving survivors of human trafficking and modern-day slavery, CAST empowers victims of human trafficking to regain control of their lives, and works towards ending all forms of human rights violations.

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