



Caring for Trafficked Persons: Guidance for Health Practitioners

IOM and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Produce Training Guidance Materials in Arabic.

Cairo 28th March – This month the IOM Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Regional Office marked the launch of essential guidance materials in Arabic for facilitators of health services for victims of trafficking.

The development of the handbook, *'Caring for Trafficked Persons: Guidance for Health Practitioners,'* and accompanying training package in Arabic represents a significant step forward in helping to develop capacity in the MENA region to identify victims of trafficking and provide them with appropriate care.

This initiative is part of a global programme on health and trafficking that IOM and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) have been jointly carrying out for many years. It has been funded by the US State Department Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (J/TIP).

For health care providers, trafficking in persons is best understood as a serious health risk because as with other forms of violence, it is associated with physical and psychological harm. Health providers may come into contact with victims of trafficking at different stages of the trafficking process and at different stages of their recovery.

The informed and attentive health care provider can play an important role in assisting and treating individuals who may have suffered repeated abuse. For health practitioners, diagnosing and treating trafficked persons can pose a range of new challenges related to care provision.



Together, IOM and the LSHTM published a handbook for health providers in 2009 (*Caring for Trafficked Persons: Guidance for Health Providers*), which combines research, field experience and good practice into a tool for those who provide health services to trafficked persons.

In 2012, several pilot trainings were undertaken to test and further develop a training package on *Caring for Trafficked Persons*. The *Facilitator's Guide* and accompanying materials have been developed for individuals who wish to carry out training to help a concerned health provider understand the phenomenon of human trafficking, recognize some of the associated health problems and consider safe and appropriate approaches to providing health care for trafficked persons. The training is designed for all types and levels of health providers, particularly those actively providing services.

To improve and finalize the training materials, 178 health providers participated in pilot trainings in seven countries covering three regions, held respectively in Spanish, English and Arabic. The countries were: El Salvador and Costa Rica (Central America), Belize, Guyana and Antigua (Caribbean), and Jordan and Egypt (Middle East). The trainers were specialists in health and trafficking from IOM Regional Offices and Missions and the LSHTM, who carried out the trainings in coordination with local health and local trafficking partners.

In addition to these pilots, IOM partners in several countries carried out replicas of the trainings (e.g. in Antigua). IOM has also undertaken replicas in Egypt and Jamaica. Within IOM, the project *Caring for Trafficked Persons* is laudable for its inter-sectoral approach, involving both experts from the Migration Health (MHD) and the Migration Assistance Division (MAD).

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