

2022

## The Implementation of a Validated CSEC Screening Tool for Youth Age 11 - 17 in a Pediatric Emergency Room

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### Recommended Citation

Clark, Julie; Doss, Josie; Canady, Krystal E.; and Head, Yameika MD, "The Implementation of a Validated CSEC Screening Tool for Youth Age 11 - 17 in a Pediatric Emergency Room" (2022). *Graduate Research Posters*. 31.

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## The Implementation of a Validated CSEC Tool for Youth Age 11 – 17 in a Pediatric Emergency Room

Abuse of children is a public health issue covering a range of inflicted harm from neglect to physical to sexual abuse. A severe form of child sexual abuse is the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC). This phenomenon involves sexual crimes against children, including exploitation for gain. High-risk indicators are noted throughout the literature to aid in identification, but some children are vulnerable because of their young age. Perpetrators can be family, friends, or acquaintances and choose their potential victims by recognizing a child's vulnerabilities. Inevitable physical and mental health consequences are associated with CSEC involvement; hence these youth seek out healthcare. They do not self-identify because they do not see themselves as victims, and are not identified by Healthcare Providers (HCP) due to knowledge deficit and decreased awareness. Healthcare providers are in pivotal roles in identifying these victims as they seek out healthcare, however, training and a validated screening tool are needed to enable identification of these high-risk youth.

Research questions: 1) Will a CSEC educational intervention and implementation of a validated CSEC screening tool, increase the confidence levels of licensed healthcare providers in a Pediatric Emergency Room in identifying high-risk youth age 11 – 17 over baseline confidence levels? 2) Will the implementation of a validated CSEC screening tool in a Pediatric Emergency Room increase the rate of referrals of high-risk youth age 11 – 17 over pre-implementation rate as determined by retrospective chart review?

Sample/population: Licensed HCPs in a Pediatric Emergency Room

Research Design: Cross-sectional with pre and post-test (confidence levels) and retrospective chart review (referral rate).

Statistical analysis using descriptive statistics, paired samples t-tests, and Pearson's r and Spearman's rho correlations were performed. Results showed that there was an increase in perceived confidence levels, no increase in the referral rate; however, documentation by the HCP did improve.