

Background

- Approximately 300,000 youth are at risk of being sexually exploited in the United States each year.
- As many as 16,000 girls and women in Chicago are engaged in prostitution, with many having engaged in prostitution before the age of 15.
- The internet plays an integral role in sex trafficking that has yet to be fully examined or understood.
- In Chicago, one study found that over 1/3 of men who buy sex reported using the internet to buy sex.
- Until recently, the men who fuel demand by buying sex and thus perpetuate sexual exploitation and prostitution have remained invisible to researchers, policy makers, and law enforcement.



Purpose

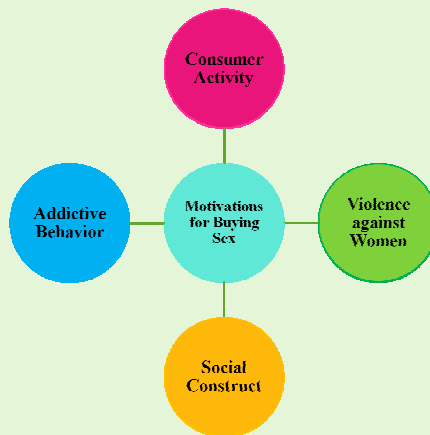
The purpose of this pilot study is to assess the feasibility of conducting a critical appraisal of internet postings of men in Illinois who post on the USA Sex Guide. Our intent is to: 1) elucidate their motivations for buying sex; and 2) explicate the elements that contribute to and sustain the vulnerability of girls and women who are involved in prostitution.

Methods

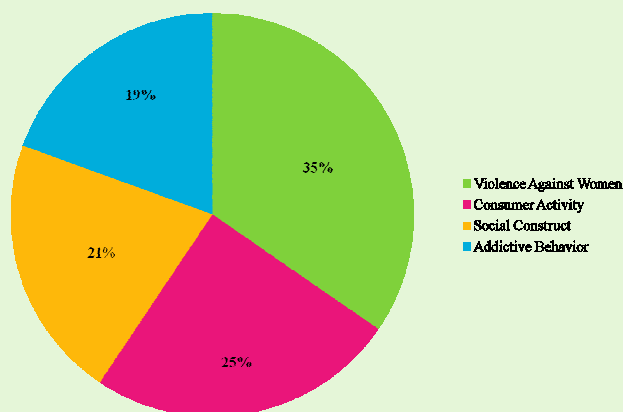
- All internet postings displayed in all forums (BackPage Advertiser Reviews, Escort Classified Ads, News and Media Reports, Massage Parlor Reports, Escort Reports, General Reports, Strip Club Reports, Streetwalker Reports, Escort Classified Ads – Member Discussions, Craigslist Reviews, Ripoff Reports, and Truck Stop Reports) for Chicago, Rockford, & Melrose Park during the months of January and February 2014 were collected and uploaded into Dedoose Cross Platform Application.
- Inductive and open coding were conducted.
- Content was analyzed and categorized into themes and sub-themes and grouped according to our emerging coding framework.

Results & Analysis

Emerging Coding Framework



Percentage of Codes by Motivation Theme



Quotes Illustrating Emerging Coding Framework

Consumer Activity: Dissatisfaction/Satisfaction

"Not a clock watcher at all. Loves to please. Saw her SW'ing (streetwalking) on Parmele a couple weeks ago. That should give you an idea of what prices to expect."

Violence Against Women: Awareness of Vulnerability

"I have worked with many girls on BP (Backpage) that came off the streets, but still have the same mentality. They won't pass on a couple of dollars, they have habits, and 'your d**k is their means to their ends'."

Social Construct: Girlfriend Experience

"R-, raises a good question, but any of us fools knows what we are paying for. I sometimes pay nothing, if I just buy the girl and make her my girlfriend. Then as long as I keep her happy she will put out and try to please me...I consider myself to have a healthy mind, but I enjoy a nice pretty girl that works hard to please me, and I am willing to pay her for her work...Like I said, The going rate is the girl you date!"

Sex Addiction: Inability to Stop

"I've been engaging in this mongering life for years, but I only decided to start writing about it, when I felt like I was not going to change anytime soon, and maybe someone out here would benefit from my experiences."

Conclusion

- The use of the USA Sex Guide is an innovative and appropriate method of exploring motivations for buying sex.
- The Chicago forum provided significantly more data than the other locations and should be followed over time to explore seasonal trends that may not be apparent in winter months.
- Themes quickly emerged related to men's motivations for buying sex.
- The volume and content of the posts on the Illinois section of the USA Sex Guide substantiates the use of the internet as a facilitator of prostitution and sexual exploitation.
- An anonymous online community of buyers of sex creates space to normalize the exploitation of an already vulnerable population.
- Increasing public awareness with research focused on the demand side of prostitution can serve as a catalyst for action.

Acknowledgements

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