Background

● In 2019, 656,000 cases of child maltreatment were reported nationally
● 877 sex trafficking cases in 2019, with almost all victims 17 years or younger
● Victims are more likely to present to the emergency department (ED) with their perpetrator
● We contend that the presence of the abuser limits their ability to report maltreatment
● In the ED, the restroom is one of the few places for a victim to be alone

Objective

● Implement a nonverbal system of reporting maltreatment to capture victims of abuse who present to the ED with their perpetrator

Methods

● An urban tertiary care center with an annual pediatric ED volume of 35,000
● Six months of prospective abuse reporting was collected via Research Electronic Data Capture (REDCap)
● After 6 months, English and Spanish signs were hung in the restroom of our ED
● Signs instructed victims of abuse to place a sticker on their urine cup to speak with a physician in private
● The physician was notified if a sticker was placed, all visitors were asked to leave the patient’s room, and more history was obtained
● Cases were logged via Redcap questionnaire with an additional question of “Was abuse reported with a sticker on urine cup?”

Hypothesis

● We will capture otherwise missed abuse cases if a reporting system is implemented in the restroom of our ED

Results

● A total of 59 abuse cases during 6 months of baseline recording compared to 74 cases in the 6 months following our intervention
● Sticker reporting was used once, which resulted in physician follow up
● Victims were mostly female in sex and gender identity in baseline (64%) and intervention (73%) groups
● Baseline abuse (%): physical (68), sexual (36), verbal (20), human trafficking (2), neglect (2)
● Post intervention (%): physical (39), sexual (59), verbal (10), human trafficking (0), neglect (5)

Conclusions

● In our patient population, this system has not shown to be a useful tool for patients to disclose maltreatment. More research is needed to identify obstacles in reporting maltreatment

References