# Recent Developments in the Methodologies for Measuring Human Trafficking: Focus on Administrative Data

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# Background on Prevalence Estimation

- How many people (men, women, and children) are trafficked across the globe? No one really knows!
  - Estimates range from 25m-50m globally
- This huge variation may be due to the different sources of data; conceptual and statistical definitions of TIP; methodologies used; or the persons doing the research, etc
- National-level aggregate estimates are sometimes extrapolations that are not based on scientific grounding

# What is TIP Prevalence?

- The proportion of people involved in a specific activity or who experience a specific condition within a specified time frame.

  - Prevalence estimates are generally expressed as rates per 1,000 in the reference population.

- In human trafficking, it is the proportion of the population in the specified geographic area, sector, and/or industry who are trafficked.

# Current Methods of TIP Prevalence Estimation

Probability-proportion-to-size Sampling (PPS)

Capture Re-Capture Methods

Time-Space Location Sampling

Link Tracing Methods and Respondent Driven Sampling

Network-Based Sampling Techniques (e.g., NSUM)

Multiple Systems Estimators (Use of some administrative lists)

# Challenges with Current Prevalence Estimation Methods

- No method is perfect and all are fraught with unmeasured errors
  - The nature of TIP populations makes it difficult to accurately assess the nature and scope of the problem
  - Definitional issues present another barrier to accurate prevalence estimation
- Using 2-3 methods of estimation may help to reduce the errors associated with one method
  - The Prevalence Reduction Innovation Forum
- There is therefore more reliance on ADMINISTRATIVE DATA because most prevalence estimation methods are prohibitive in cost and expertise

# Administrative Data: General

- **Definition:** Data that is collected for non-statistical purposes to provide information for the management and operations of publicly funded programs

- **Examples:** Registration, immigration, transactions, pensions, taxation, births, deaths, vaccination records, land holding, etc

- **Nature:** Administrative data can be closed or open. Lyon et al., (2015) advocate for opening access to administrative data to improve access for voluntary and community organizations, social enterprises, and private businesses for statistical analysis and evaluation purposes

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# Administrative Data in TIP Prevalence Estimation

- Human trafficking offenses or incidents have been added to various administrative data
  - These include the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program; IOM-Microsoft Global Victim-Perpetrator Synthetic Dataset at the Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative (CTDC) data hub; and Department of Children and Family Services administrative databases in the US
- These sources, provide *readily available* data that can be used by researchers, policy and program officers, or funders to understand the scope of TIP

# Advantages of Administrative Data in TIP Prevalence Estimation

- Allow for transparency, participation, efficiency, and innovation if linked to TIP

- It is already available – cuts costs and saves time

- Can be accurate if collected with the right tools and by reputable organizations

- Administrative data-sets on TIP can be longitudinal if collected over multiple years.

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# Drawbacks of Administrative Data in TIP Prevalence Estimation

- Tend to underestimate the prevalence of TIP

- Reliant on the various TIP definitions and indicators which may vary from agency to agency
  - Multiple systems may use different definitions and indicators

- If background information on TIP is lacking, data can be less useful

- Can result in the personal identification of TIP victims if the link tracing is not robust enough to conceal personal information – not all agencies have strong encryption capabilities

# Administrative Data in TIP Prevalence Estimation: Conclusion and the Future

- Will be part of TIP prevalence estimation, especially with the increase in the use of technology

- The Census is a space that anti-TIP stakeholders could explore; that will produce more reliable estimates

- Researchers and others should be aware of the underestimates in most administrative data

- Administrative data should be triangulated with other prevalence estimation methods

- Training is required for those collecting administrative data that includes TIP cases