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## Strengthening Indonesia's National Police Directorate for Enhanced Protection of Women and Children

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## Abstract

Crimes against the protection of women and children (*Tindak Pidana Perdagangan Anak/TPPA*) and human trafficking offences (*Tindak Pidana Perdagangan Orang/TPPO*) are serious transnational crimes that violate human rights and threaten social order. In Indonesia, TPPA and TPPO cases rose significantly from 2023 to 2024, exposing a persistent gap between legal frameworks and their practical enforcement. This study analyzes the evolution of TPPA and TPPO case handling by reviewing relevant regulations, examining annual case data, and identifying key challenges in the prevention and prosecution of these cases. Adopting a qualitative descriptive approach, this study draws on statistics from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection and the Indonesian National Police, supplemented by a review of relevant legislation. Findings indicate that while reported cases continue to increase, resolution rates remain low due to the limited availability of specialized personnel, inadequate infrastructure, particularly in remote regions, weak inter-agency coordination, low public awareness, and insufficient victim protection. A notable legal development in 2024 is the creation of a dedicated TPPA and TPPO Directorate within the National Police, aimed at improving investigative procedures, institutional structures, and human resource capacity. The study concludes that stronger regulatory implementation, improved coordination, and comprehensive victim support are essential to address the ongoing enforcement gap.

## Keywords

Acceleration, Criminal Law, Legal Policy, Legal Protection, National Police, Victim Protection, Women and Children.

## 1. Introduction

Human trafficking continues to be one of the most serious human rights violations of the 21st century, affecting millions of people around the world (Qasim et al., 2025). Trafficking in Persons (*Tindak Pidana Perdagangan Orang/TPPO*) and Crimes against Women and Children (*Tindak Pidana Perdagangan Anak/TPPA*) are crimes that not only cause physical and psychological harm to victims but also have a long-term impact on the social and economic stability of a country. In Indonesia, efforts to address these two crimes have progressed, although they still face significant challenges. Various regulations and policies, such as Law Number 21 of 2007 on the Eradication of Trafficking in Persons, demonstrate the government's commitment to tackling this crime. However, despite these regulations, the effectiveness of their implementation still needs improvement, especially in terms of inter-agency coordination and the availability of human resources in the field.

Based on data obtained from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (*Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak/KPPPA*) and the National Police, the increase in the number of TPPA and TPPO cases from 2023 to 2024 reflects an alarming trend. For example, according to a report from the National Police, the number of TPPA and TPPO cases recorded in 2023 increased by 15% compared to the previous year. Meanwhile, data from KPPPA show that in 2023, there were more than 1,500 reported cases of TPPA, with over 30% of cases occurring in areas with limited access to legal facilities and adequate resources. This spike in the number of cases not only signifies an increase in public awareness but also shows that the current system has not been fully effective in addressing the issue (Albab et al., 2022).

One of the main factors affecting the effectiveness of the handling of TPPA and TPPO cases is the limited number of trained personnel in the Police Women and Children Protection Unit (*Pelayanan Perempuan dan Anak/PPA*). Based on internal police data, the number of personnel in the PPA unit in 2024 remains relatively minimal, with the total number of personnel on duty not proportionate to the number of cases, especially in smaller and more remote areas. In some areas, the ratio of personnel to the number of cases reached 1:50, which clearly indicates that the PPA unit faces a very high workload and requires additional personnel to provide a faster and more effective response. Another challenge faced in handling TPPA and TPPO cases is coordination between institutions, both at the central and regional levels. Although there are various policies that regulate cooperation mechanisms, practices in the field often show overlapping tasks and lack of communication between related institutions, such as the Police, KPPPA, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) involved in victim protection (Alwi & Ibrahim, 2020).

To overcome these obstacles, the establishment of the Directorate of Trafficking in Persons and Crimes against Women and Children at the National Police is a crucial and strategic step. The establishment of this directorate aims to enhance the effectiveness of case handling by streamlining the process and strengthening coordination among related institutions. In addition, the establishment of the Directorate of TPPA and TPPO is also expected to provide greater focus on handling cases related to crimes against persons and children, as well as improving the quality and quantity of human resources involved in handling these cases (Piri, 2013).

The rising trend of TPPA and TPPO cases in Indonesia, coupled with limited personnel capacity and weak inter-agency coordination, underscores the urgency for stronger enforcement measures. This study offers a novel perspective by linking legal framework analysis with an evaluation of operational readiness, focusing on the newly established Directorate of TPPA and TPPO as a strategic reform. This study analyzes the evolution of TPPA and TPPO case handling by reviewing relevant

regulations, examining annual case data, and identifying key challenges in the prevention and prosecution of these cases.

## **2. Literature Review**

Human trafficking, encompassing TPPA and TPPO, represents a severe violation of human rights, causing profound physical, psychological, and socio-economic harm (Purwanto, 2017). Indonesia's legal response, primarily through Law Number 21 of 2007 on the Eradication of Trafficking in Persons, establishes a robust framework for prevention, prosecution, and victim rehabilitation (Syam, 2025). This law defines trafficking broadly, covering recruitment, transfer, and exploitation through coercion or fraud, and aligns with international standards like the Palermo Protocol (Arifin et al., 2021). However, implementation remains inconsistent due to vague provisions on emerging issues, such as cyber-based trafficking and organ trade, which limit its effectiveness in addressing modern trafficking networks (Alfani, 2024). Studies have highlighted that, while the law mandates strict penalties, judicial biases and a lack of specialized training often result in lenient sentencing, thereby undermining deterrence (Farrell et al., 2014).

Regional disparities further exacerbate the gap between legal frameworks and their enforcement. In rural and border areas, such as West Kalimantan and Papua, limited access to legal resources hinders the detection and prosecution of cases (Alwi & Ibrahim, 2020). Comparative studies, such as those examining the Philippines' Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking, suggest that integrated task forces and clear implementing regulations could enhance Indonesia's approach (George & Stanley, 2019). Without such mechanisms, overlapping institutional roles and inadequate funding continue to weaken enforcement, leaving victims vulnerable and perpetrators unpunished (Serlika & Yonani, 2020).

Effective enforcement of anti-trafficking laws faces significant obstacles, including limited personnel, inadequate coordination, and systemic issues such as corruption (Farrell et al., 2014). In Indonesia, the Women and Children Protection Unit (PPA) is understaffed, with a 2024 National Police report indicating a personnel-to-case ratio of 1:50 in some regions, leading to delayed investigations and overburdened officers (Anggraini, 2021). The absence of standardized training on trafficking-specific investigative techniques further hampers case resolution, particularly for complex transnational syndicates operating across borders, such as those in Malaysia and Thailand (Sampetoding & Burhanuddin, 2025). Corruption within law enforcement, as noted in Transparency International's 2023 Southeast Asia report, also undermines trust and allows trafficking networks to evade justice.

Inter-agency coordination remains a critical barrier. Despite frameworks like the 2011 Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection and the National Police, the lack of implementing regulations results in fragmented efforts (Nasution et al., 2023). For instance, data sharing between the Police, KPPPA, and NGOs is often delayed, slowing victim referrals and policy evaluations. Comparative models, such as Australia's multi-agency task forces, demonstrate that real-time data systems and joint operations can improve coordination (Bernadus, 2024). Adopting such approaches, alongside issuing a Chief of Police Regulation to clarify roles, could address these gaps and enhance Indonesia's response to TPPA and TPPO.

The rise of digital platforms has further complicated enforcement. Online recruitment via social media and encrypted apps has surged, yet law enforcement lacks the technological capacity to track these activities effectively (Theja, 2024). Strengthening investigator training and investing in cyber-forensic tools are essential to counter these evolving threats. Victim protection is central to addressing TPPA and TPPO, yet Indonesia's mechanisms remain underdeveloped (Syam, 2025). Law Number 21 of 2007 mandates rehabilitation, but safe houses,

psychosocial support, and reintegration programs are underfunded and unevenly distributed, particularly in remote areas (Albab et al., 2022). Trauma-informed care and community-based reintegration as critical for victim recovery (Kubiak et al., 2017; King et al., 2022). However, only a small number of TPPA victims in 2023 received adequate support, per KPPPA data. Socio-cultural factors, such as patriarchal norms, exacerbate vulnerabilities, particularly for women and children, who face social stigma and economic dependence that deter reporting (Pardede, 2020; Amalia, 2023).

Prevention strategies are equally critical but under-explored. Community education and poverty alleviation programs address root causes, yet their impact is limited by inconsistent implementation (Dalimunthe et al., 2021). UNICEF's 2024 report on child protection highlights successful school-based awareness campaigns in Southeast Asia, which could be adapted to Indonesia's context to increase public awareness. Economic empowerment initiatives targeting vulnerable groups, such as those in border regions, are also essential but require sustained funding and coordination (Elu & Yusuf, 2025).

Theoretically, victimology provides a lens to prioritize victim-centered approaches, emphasizing survivors' rights and long-term recovery (Kownacki, 2021). However, without integrated systems for protection and prevention, efforts remain fragmented. Strengthening safe house networks, expanding psychosocial services, and scaling up community-based prevention programs are critical to closing these gaps and fostering a holistic response to trafficking (Gonzalez et al., 2020).

### 3. Methods

In this study, the author used a descriptive qualitative approach. This approach is used to describe phenomena in detail, identify patterns, and gain a deeper understanding of the applicable regulations, the development of case handling, existing obstacles, and the urgency of establishing the Directorate of TPPA and TPPO within the National Police. This approach enables researchers to thoroughly analyze the data by exploring information from multiple sources in depth.

The data used in this study will consist of both primary and secondary data. Primary data will be obtained through in-depth interviews with key stakeholders directly involved in handling cases of Human Trafficking and Transnational Organized Crime. These stakeholders include officers from the Police Women and Child Protection Unit, representatives from KPPPA, Non-Governmental Organizations focusing on TPPA and TPPO issues, as well as legal practitioners and academics specializing in transnational crime and child protection. Meanwhile, secondary data will be gathered through literature reviews and document analysis. This will include relevant regulations and policies concerning the TPPA and TPPO in Indonesia, as well as annual reports from the KPPPA and the National Police on the number of Money Laundering (ML) and TPPO cases. Additionally, it will encompass previous research reports related to the challenges in handling ML and TPPO in the country.

The data collection techniques in this study will include in-depth interviews, literature reviews, document analysis, and observations. In-depth interviews will be carried out with the previously identified key informants to gain insight into their views, experiences, and challenges in handling TPPA and TPPO cases. These interviews will also explore the urgency of establishing a Directorate of TPPA and TPPO within the National Police and evaluate the implementation of existing regulations and policies in the field. Additionally, a literature study and document analysis will be conducted by reviewing various sources, including laws and regulations, annual reports, and statistical data, to provide a broader understanding of the dynamics of TPPA and TPPO handling and to assess the effectiveness of

current regulations. Furthermore, observations will be conducted in several Policewomen and Child Protection units located in areas with a high number of TPPA and TPPO cases, allowing for direct observation of the case-handling process and the coordination between relevant institutions.

The data collected in this study will be analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. This method will be employed to identify and categorize the main themes emerging from interviews, documents, and observations. The data will be organized into several key themes, including applicable regulations and their implementation, trends in the increase of TPPA and TPPO cases, obstacles encountered during case handling, the role and number of personnel in the PPA Unit, and the establishment of a Directorate for TPPA and TPPO. Once these themes are identified, further analysis will be conducted to examine the relationships between them, allowing for a deeper understanding of the urgency and challenges in addressing Money Laundering and TPPO issues in Indonesia.

## **4. Results**

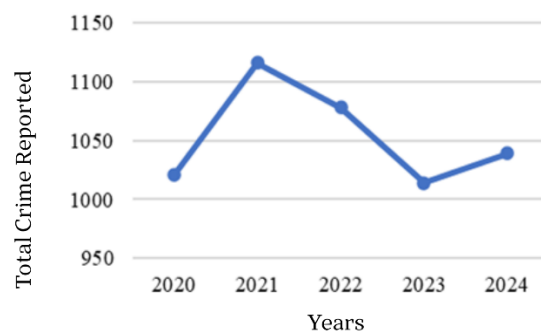
### **4.1 The Development of the Handling of ML and TPPO Cases in Indonesia**

Internationally, Indonesia has enacted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) through Law Number 7 of 1984, which requires the state to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and report its progress periodically to the CEDAW Committee. In addition, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) has been ratified by Indonesia through Presidential Decree Number 36 of 1990, affirming children's right to protection from violence and exploitation (Arifin et al., 2021). At the national level, the legal framework for handling PPA is supported by Law No. 23 of 2004 on Domestic Violence and Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection, which complement each other in regulating the prevention, prosecution, and restoration of victims' rights.

The most important regulation governing the eradication of TPPO in Indonesia is Law Number 21 of 2007 on the Eradication of Trafficking in Persons (Government of the Republic of Indonesia, 2007). This law establishes a robust legal framework to address the issue of criminalizing persons, including both children and adults. This law covers legal aspects related to prevention, victim protection, and law enforcement against perpetrators of people crimes. In the Law, the crime of person is defined broadly, including the recruitment, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons through violence, threat of violence, fraud, or other coercion for exploitation, both sexual and non-sexual.

Data from *Komnas Perempuan's* Annual Report shows that the total number of reported cases of violence against women in 2024 reached 445,502, up 9.77% from 401,975 cases in the previous year. Looking at the last five years, this annual figure has fluctuated, in 2019 there were 302,686 cases, dropping to 226,062 cases in 2020 due to the pandemic, then jumping to 338,496 cases in 2021 and 339,782 cases in 2022, before finally reaching its peak in 2024 with 445,502 cases (Syam, 2025).

In the group of children, Online Information System for the Protection of Women and Children data recorded that between January and November 2023, cases of violence against children reached 15,120 cases, with 12,158 female victims and 4,691 male victims, where sexual violence ranked as the most common form of violence. When averaged over the last five years, the Police PPA and PPO Sub-directorate Unit handled only 105,475 cases, or approximately 21% of the total reports received by *Komnas Perempuan* and its partner services (Theja, 2024).



**Figure 1.** Data of PPA Criminal Cases

Figure 1 illustrates the total number of PPA criminal cases handled by the Women and Children’s Service Unit of West Java Regional Police from 2020 to 2024. In 2020, slightly more than 1,020 cases were recorded, showing a relatively moderate level of violence. Overall, the graph indicates significant fluctuations in the number of violent cases against children in the last five years. Various factors, including changes in the reporting system, the effectiveness of prevention programs, and external factors such as economic conditions or the pandemic, could influence these fluctuations. The decline in 2022 may reflect the effectiveness of prevention measures, but further analysis is necessary to fully understand the causes and strengthen future child protection policies.

One major factor contributing to the increase in TPPA and TPPO cases is the rise of complex human trafficking networks operating both nationally and internationally. These crimes often involve transnational syndicates that exploit differences in legal systems between countries to evade law enforcement. According to the National Counterterrorism Agency, more than 40% of TPPO cases recorded in 2024 involved perpetrators residing abroad, particularly in neighboring countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore.

#### 4.2 Limited Capacity of Investigators

The process of reporting cases of violence to the police is still convoluted. Based on the findings of *Komnas Perempuan*, the bureaucratic procedures, starting from initial verification at the service unit, completing various forms, and continuing to referral to the PPA Unit, often create technical and administrative obstacles that intimidate victims or cause them to give up before their complaints are officially recorded (Fallo et al., 2025). Access to police stations or integrated service units is also uneven, particularly in remote areas, making it difficult for the most vulnerable victims to reach “child-friendly” and “women-friendly” reporting channels.

Although a foundation for cooperation already exists, such as the 2011 Memorandum of Understanding between the Minister of Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection and the Chief of Police on Gender Mainstreaming, technical implementation in the field remains hindered by the absence of implementing regulations that fully integrate the structures and procedures of both institutions. Furthermore, the Chief of Police Regulation and the Ministerial Regulation, which are intended to elaborate on Presidential Decree Number 20/2024 and Police Regulation Number 1 of 2022 on the Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming in the Police, have not yet been issued. As a result, the work framework, division of functions, budget allocation, and reporting mechanisms between the Police, Kemen PPPA, and KPI often operate separately. Consequently, case handling is poorly synchronized: data is difficult to exchange in real time, victim referrals are delayed, and policy evaluations take longer to reach a common understanding (Amalia, 2023).

#### **4.3 Urgency and Control of Handling TPPA and TPPO Cases**

TPPA and TPPO cases in Indonesia are highly complex. These crimes are often disguised as illegal labor migration, sexual exploitation, or modern slavery, primarily targeting children and women, who are among the most vulnerable groups in society. Law Number 21 of 2007 on the Eradication of the Crime of Trafficking in Persons serves as a crucial legal foundation, mandating strict punishment for all individuals involved in such crimes. Additionally, complementary regulations such as Presidential Regulation Number 12 of 2019 on the National Action Plan for Combating TPPO further demonstrate the Indonesian government's strong commitment to addressing this issue through a multi-sectoral approach (Lepong, 2017).

However, despite the existence of a well-developed legal framework, the handling of TPPA and TPPO cases continues to face significant obstacles. One of the biggest challenges is the limited human resources within the units responsible for handling these cases, such as the Women and Children Protection Unit of the National Police. The number of personnel assigned remains far below the increasing number of cases. The shortage of trained officers with specialized expertise often leads to delays and reduces the overall effectiveness of case handling. Furthermore, this lack of human resources also limits the ability to provide adequate victim support, which is a crucial part of the rehabilitation process after victims are rescued (Anggraini, 2021).

In addition, geographical and infrastructural constraints remain major obstacles in handling TPPA and TPPO cases. In remote areas, such as border regions or areas with limited access, law enforcement officials often face significant challenges in detecting and responding to these crimes. A 2024 report from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection stated that regions such as West Kalimantan, Papua, and East Nusa Tenggara record some of the highest numbers of cases. This situation causes responses in these areas to be very slow, and in some instances, victims do not receive adequate assistance (Alwi & Ibrahim, 2020).

TPPA and TPPO cases in Indonesia are highly complex. These crimes are often disguised as illegal labor migration, sexual exploitation, and modern slavery, primarily targeting children and women, the most vulnerable groups in society. Law Number 21 of 2007 on the Eradication of the Crime of Trafficking in Persons serves as a key legal foundation for combating TPPA and TPPO, mandating strict punishment for all individuals involved in such crimes (Putra & Surya, 2021). Furthermore, complementary regulations such as Presidential Regulation Number 12 of 2019 on the National Action Plan for Combating TPPO underscore the Indonesian government's strong commitment to addressing this issue through a multi-sectoral approach.

The establishment of the Directorate for Crimes against Women and Children and Crimes of Trafficking in Persons by the Police in 2024 is a strategic step aimed at accelerating the handling of TPPA and TPPO cases in Indonesia. This directorate was created to provide greater focus, improved management, and better coordination in addressing these serious and growing problems (Lepong, 2017).

The Directorate of TPPA and TPPO was formed in response to the urgent need to strengthen the Police's capacity in dealing with the increasing number and complexity of cases involving children and human trafficking. In practice, TPPA and TPPO do not only involve sexual exploitation and forced labor but also encompass other crimes such as modern slavery, illegal labor exploitation, and the criminalization of children for illegal adoption.

#### **5. Discussion**

Based on the results, the increasing number of TPPA and TPPO cases presents a significant challenge. A report from KPPPA indicates that by 2023, there will be more than 1,500 TPPA cases, with the number expected to increase annually. In

some areas, for example, in border areas and vulnerable areas (Fallo et al., 2025; Elu & Yusuf, 2025; Sampetoding & Burhanuddin, 2025). Despite efforts to strengthen law enforcement, inter-agency coordination is often hindered by geographical and administrative factors, resulting in delays in case handling (Nasution et al., 2023).

Despite the increase in reported cases, there are still many cases that go undetected or unreported by the community, particularly in areas that have not been reached by legal protection programs or among community groups with limited knowledge about the dangers of human trafficking. Based on a study conducted by KPPPA in 2023, around 25–30% of the total TPPA and TPPO cases occurring in rural and border areas are not recorded in the official reporting system, indicating a significant gap in monitoring and handling cases in these regions (Sampetoding & Burhanuddin, 2025).

In 2024, the National Police established the Directorate for Crimes of Trafficking in Women and Children and Human Trafficking to enhance case handling through greater focus, stronger coordination, and improved investigator competency. This reform addresses persistent issues, including limited specialized personnel, weak inter-agency coordination, and inconsistent responses across regions. To operationalize its mandate, a dedicated Chief of Police Regulation is needed to define the directorate's structure, set investigator competency standards, streamline reporting, and establish integrated data systems. Clear, binding guidelines would enable PPA units nationwide to respond more consistently, accelerate investigations, and strengthen protection for women and children, particularly in underserved areas (Angraini, 2021).

From a budgetary perspective, the establishment of this directorate also demonstrates the government's commitment to supporting efforts to eradicate ML and TPPO. The directorate will be equipped with adequate facilities to support investigations, ranging from information technology tools to identify human trafficking networks to resources for victim protection, including safe shelters and psychological rehabilitation for victims (Fariha & Hossain, 2024). With this approach, the handling of cases will focus not only on the legal aspects but also on victim recovery, which is essential for restoring them to a better quality of life. Although considerable strides have been made in recognizing and responding to human trafficking, the success of laws and enforcement systems still varies from region to region, influenced by differing socio-economic conditions as well as political and cultural elements (Gonzalez, 2020).

While the establishment of the TPPA and TPPO Directorate in 2024 is a positive step in accelerating case handling, significant challenges remain in ensuring optimal operations in remote areas lacking trained personnel and in strengthening coordination with international institutions, given the transnational nature of trafficking networks. Beyond organizational reforms, the police must enhance regional capacity, foster stronger global cooperation, and apply victimology theory viewing victims as subjects requiring comprehensive and sustainable protection and rights restoration supported by a cohesive global approach (Kownacki, 2021; Theja, 2024; Alfani, 2024).

Although Indonesia has ratified CEDAW, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and enacted Law Number 21 of 2007, significant gaps remain in coordination, capacity, and victim protection. Comparative practices, such as multi-agency task forces and integrated data systems in the Philippines and Australia, show effective models that could be adapted. Aligning procedures with the Palermo Protocol and issuing clear Chief of Police implementing regulations would strengthen Indonesia's compliance and create a more consistent, victim-centered response to TPPA and TPPO. This study emphasizes the need for integrated regulations, stronger institutions, and better coordination in handling TPPA and TPPO cases. It highlights gaps in the implementation of Law Number 21/2007,

calling for harmonized procedures, adequate funding, real-time data sharing, more specialized personnel in key areas, and full operation of the new Directorate as a central hub for enforcement, victim protection, and inter-agency collaboration.

## **6. Conclusion**

Efforts to combat human trafficking in Indonesia have progressed through regulations, such as Law Number 21 of 2007, and the ratification of the Palermo Protocol. However, the rising number of TPPA and TPPO cases from 2023 to 2024 highlights persistent challenges, particularly the shortage of trained personnel in Police PPA Units, especially in remote areas. Limited inter-agency coordination, budget constraints, and inadequate facilities further hinder the resolution of cases. The establishment of the Directorate of TPPA and TPPO at the National Police in 2024 is a positive step toward more structured handling, but strengthening human resource capacity and victim protection remains essential to address these crimes more effectively.

Although this study integrates both primary data and interviews with secondary sources, its scope is limited by the sample size and geographic coverage, which may not fully represent all regional variations in handling TPPA and TPPO. Future research should involve larger-scale, multi-provincial field studies and longitudinal approaches to capture changes over time. It is recommended that policymakers expand recruitment and specialized training for personnel, particularly in high-risk and remote areas, while fostering stronger inter-agency and cross-border cooperation. Strengthening victim-centered approaches will enhance recovery outcomes and serve as a preventive measure. The findings hold important implications for law enforcement, social services, and international collaboration, emphasizing the need for sustained, multi-sectoral strategies to eradicate human trafficking in Indonesia.

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***Data Disclosure Statement***

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.



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