



## Research on mistreatment of older adults in Quebec:

summaries of scientific articles



### Partnership Research on Mistreatment of Older Adults: An Ethical Experience in Action.

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#### REFERENCE

Beaulieu, M., Gravel, S., & Lithwick, M. (1996). Partnership Research on Mistreatment of Older Adults: An Ethical Experience in Action. *Le G rontophile Journal*, 18(3), 26-34.

#### TEXT TYPE

**Format:** Scientific article

**Content:** Ethical reflection

#### DISCUSSED THEMES

Mistreatment in the community, prevention, law, intervention, ethics.

#### GOAL OR RESEARCH QUESTION

This article reflects on the ethics experience of research in partnership. It also demonstrates that ethical issues in research are not confined only to the considerations in the treatment of the research subject and data provision. To do this, it is based on an action-research focusing on the problems of mistreatment of older adults living in the community.

#### PROBLEM

Researchers and practitioners are often called upon to work in partnership in order to develop new knowledge. The research process often creates ethical issues which will lead the researchers to take a stand. However, very few textbooks on the research ethics in social sciences address the ethical decisions over the course of research. Yet, these decisions will have a much greater impact on the result of the research than the decisions made at the beginning of the study.

#### METHODOLOGY

The reflection proposed in this article is based on an action-research conducted in partnership between three research environments and three settings of practice (Local Community Service Centers [CLSC]). The information was collected on all new situations of mistreating older adults between August 1994 and August 1995 in the CLSCs Ren -Cassin, South Center and l'Estuaire. Social actors of the home care service of the three CLSCs completed a summary of 158 questions (or a text in some cases) from their visits. The study sample consists of a total of 128 situations. In order to document the experience of partnership and to integrate the point of view of partners, group interviews were then carried out with stakeholders involved within the three CLSCs.

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## RESULTS

Researchers have raised several issues, including the difficulties caused by the geographical context, bilingualism and the definition of their own role in the course of research. The partnership with the practice settings has also resulted in certain difficulties and raised important ethical questions: the need to convince partners to become involved in such research and to overcome their resistance to change, the recognition of the expertise of the CLSC René-Cassin and the change of partners during the research. The stakeholders have faced some challenges, such as the one that led to the conviction that this study would improve their practice and to deal with the duration and complexity of the proposed tool to collect the information. They were also concerned about the issue of confidentiality and the non-consent from participants in this study. After all, they felt respected as professionals and also appreciated that researchers openly received their comments. Some have felt a conflict of values between the respect of the participant's pace and the study's deadline. Several variations were observed in the stakeholders' attitude with the research process, mainly related to their individual characteristics. The study is anchored in the alliance thesis developed by Groulx (1994) because it recognizes the differences and the crossovers between the practice and research, without seeing a model prevailing on the other.

## DISCUSSION

The discussion is included with the results presented above.

## CONCLUSION

During the research process, decisions must be made sometimes involving a choice between the respect of partners and the achievement of objectives. The partnership depends on both the culture of each environment and individual and professional values of future partners. This partnership helps social research to show its human side.

## AVENUES FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

To better understand the problem of mistreatment, it would be relevant to work with older adults willing to analyze in depth the dynamics of mistreatment. The authors suggest that each partner should make an introspection of his violence and his control on others in order to talk about the perpetrators of abuse in a more discerning manner and free of judgment. They also seem to put forward the research projects in partnership between stakeholders and researchers, because they believe that the theoretical knowledge more suited to the practice may thus be products, as well as knowledge practices that rely on empirical bases.

## DRAFTING DATE

September 09, 2013

