



## Research on mistreatment of older adults in Quebec:

summaries of scientific articles

### Oh Granny, What Big Teeth You've Got!

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#### REFERENCE

Robitaille, M.-J. (1985). Oh Granny, What Big Teeth You've Got! *Santé mentale au Québec*, 10(2), 131-139.

#### TEXT TYPE

**Format:** Scientific article

**Content:** Empirical, reflective

#### DISCUSSED THEMES

Extent of the phenomenon of violence against caregivers by seniors in nursing homes, the notion of gender (profile of the aggressor) perpetrators of the aggression responsible for the attack, consequences on the personnel, obstacles to reporting among the employees, organization of services (as a cause of aggressiveness), burden and stress, training of practitioners, causes of aggressiveness of seniors in nursing homes.

#### GOAL OR RESEARCH QUESTION

The association responsible of health occupational Safety of the social affairs sector (Association santé et sécurité au travail du secteur des affaires sociales: A.S.S.T.S.A.S.) sought to raise hypotheses about the magnitude of the problem of violence by residents against practitioners/caregivers in geriatric centers, but also to provide explanations and solutions.

#### PROBLEM

Following the production of the prevention guidelines and the establishment of a assistance and consulting service to control and prevent aggression among practitioners working with psychotic patients (A.S.S.T.S.A.S.), 1983), requests for assistance from geriatric centers and long term care facilities have intensified.

This led to increased awareness of the problem of violence committed by residents against nursing home staff. However, there is no scientifically valid data to allow analysis of the situation.

#### METHODOLOGY

Information was obtained in an eclectic manner, through experiences reported by practitioners as well as by means of a «pre-investigation» type survey aimed at establishing the proportion of violent beneficiaries and the interventions carried out by personnel in relation to this issue. In total, general managers or directors of care of seventy-five institutions were contacted as part of this survey. Reviews of relevant studies as well as consultations with specialists in geriatrics were conducted to gather information on the explanatory factors and possible solutions.

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## RESULTS

According to statistics from Quebec's occupational health and safety commission. (CSST), there would appear to be an average of 20.8 accidents per year that are directly related to violence by residents against employees residential care facilities. . Several less serious incidents appear to never be reported by the victims. In addition, verbal abuse seems to be much more common than physical abuse. Leaving no physical consequences, instead they lead to low morale and loss of motivation among staff. Violent residents are often men who have been aggressive throughout their lives. Physical attacks mostly occur during medical care or basic care while verbal aggression may occur throughout the day. Staff attitudes with regard to this violence vary among individuals and institutions and possible interventions by staff are diverse.

## DISCUSSION

Aggressive manifestations usually result from a sense of fear or anger among residents. Several factors relating to the residential circumstances can also cause such feelings. Among these are mentioned unsuitable conditions and institutional practices, the changing of the clientele and of services which complicate the work of practitioners, as well as misunderstandings in client-worker relationship.

## CONCLUSION

The aggressiveness of seniors towards staff in a nursing home is a problematic of which both researchers and employers know very little, and employers and goes unreported by staff. In order to analyze the situation and find appropriate solutions the concerned authorities must above all recognize the existence of this problem. Several explanatory factors are directly related to the residential situation. To stay motivated despite this problem, practitioners need information, solidarity, supervision, advice, but also to release their emotions and receive positive reinforcement from the environment.

## AVENUES FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

To control aggression in residential settings, it is important to work on improving conditions of admissions and residence of beneficiaries, including the implementation of programs to promote integration in the living environment, and through a better adapted physical layout. In addition, we must improve the quality of the working conditions and skills of practitioners, including through the establishment of opportunities for exchanging spaces for staff. It is also essential to develop service plans and programs that are best suited to the needs of clientele. Finally, each violent incident should be analyzed in order to find adequate solutions.

## DRAFTING DATE

August 08, 2013

