



Research on mistreatment of older adults in Quebec:

summaries of scientific articles



Mistreatment of Older Adults.

REFERENCE

Dupuis, J. and Vandal, A. (1989).
Mistreatment of Older Adults. *Nursing Québec*, 9(6), 19-23.

TEXT TYPE

Format: Scientific article

Content: Case study

DISCUSSED THEMES

Definition, forms of mistreatment at home, vulnerabilities, profile of the abused person, perpetrator of abuse, consequences, intervention, organization of services, burden and stress, cultural aspects, training, defence mechanisms and practitioners' reservations, ethics.

GOAL OR RESEARCH QUESTION

This article presents the case of Mrs. Z., a victim of psychological and financial abuse, with the aim of making readers aware of this increasing problem and its extent.

PROBLEM

For centuries, domestic violence is a widespread problem on the international scene. However, this is only at the beginning of the 1980s that violence against older adults appears for the first time ever in the media. However, few data are currently available on the phenomenon and there is no consensus on the problem definition. This violence may result from an active participation (abuse, perpetration of acts) or from active or passive neglect (omission).

METHODOLOGY

No methodology section is presented in this article.

RESULTS

Mrs. Z. is 87 years old and has lived in several countries before immigrating to Quebec. She has lost several family members during the two world wars and had provided support to several others. In 1980, Mrs. Z. experiences physical and psychological problems related to her advanced age and needs services from the Local community service centres (CLSC) (nursing and social services). She has been living with her grandson and her great-granddaughter since 1984. In 1987, nothing works for Mrs. Z. for which a case of psychological and financial abuse is observed. Her telephone line is cut due to unpaid long distance calls and she receives bills for things she has not purchased. Mrs. Z feels depressed and isolated and becomes increasingly dependent and feels unworthy. A multidisciplinary intervention plan was then set up, taking into account the family context and the elements reported by the family assistant. However, several defense mechanisms and reservations have marked the intervention of the team (ignorance of the problem, feelings of helplessness, fear, etc.) Practitioners said that several factors, in relation with their personal characteristics, the seniors' rights, as well as the profile of the perpetrator of abuse may have influenced their intervention.

DISCUSSION

The discussion is included in the results presented above.

CONCLUSION

Finally, it is important as an individual to be aware of the problem of violence against older adults, but it is equally important, as a community, to assert and recognize the rights of abused older adults.

AVENUES FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

For greater recognition of older adults' rights, practitioners should have access to a legal adviser and receive continuous training, as well as to an external consultant to help them manage complex situations. The problem of violence against the senior population should also be a political matter.

It is also suggested to develop a body of knowledge towards violence against older adults. It appears in fact essential to collect data to help identify the most common forms of violence, and bringing together all the indicators of abuse and violence in order to disseminate these to practitioners.

On a different note, it is proposed to provide information sessions for caregivers so that they are better equipped to interact healthily with older adults, as well as to carefully listen to what the family assistants have to say because of their good knowledge of their clientele. Lastly, when older adults are found fit and are diagnosed as being victims of violence, it is important to always respect their decisions in the direction of interventions.

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