



Research on mistreatment of older adults in Quebec:

summaries of scientific articles



A Comprehensive Approach to Elder Abuse.

REFERENCE

Lithwick, M. (1992). A Comprehensive Approach to Elder Abuse. *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, 68(2), 123-132.

TEXT TYPE

Format: Scientific article

Content: Description of an intervention program

DISCUSSED THEMES

Definition, extent of the phenomenon, forms of mistreatment at home, risk factors, vulnerabilities, concept of gender, profile of the abused person, authors of the abuse, explanatory theories, barriers to reporting, prevention, detection, intervention, burden and stress, training, screening tools.

GOAL OR RESEARCH QUESTION

This article aims to describe the intervention protocol, the method of staff training and the tools for screening and assessment that have been developed to guide practitioners at the Jewish Family Social Service Center in Montreal (JFSSC) for detection and prevention of elder abuse, in the context of their work.

PROBLEM

Understanding the problem of elder abuse is difficult because there is a lack of knowledge and of reliable data on the issue, but also because of an absence of consensus on its causes and on how to intervene when it occurs. Since 52% of its clientele is composed of seniors, the JFSSC developed, in 1989, a comprehensive approach to elder abuse, in order to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon and to better intervene with seniors who are victims of abuse or who show significant risk factors.

METHODOLOGY

This article presents the problem of elder abuse and describes the «Abuse and Neglect of Elders» (ANE) project of the JFSSC. However, there is no Methodology section as such.

RESULTS

There are several theories that attempt to take on the causes of elder abuse, but this task is rendered more complex by the fact that it is a multifactorial problem. It appears to have multiple causes: ageism, demographic change, health issues of the caregiver, the continuing of a history of violence and the dependency caused by the loss of autonomy of the elder. In addition, many similarities are noted between elder abuse and other forms of violence in the family, with regard to the characteristics of victims and abusers. This article also exposes the fact that many seniors prefer to remain in abusive situation rather than to report it, for a variety of complex reasons.

The comprehensive approach put forward in the ANE project is focused on prevention and is carried out through the development of tools for screening and assessment, as well as through employee training. In particular, a directory of resources regarding the issue was created, practitioners attended workshops and presentations on the subject on a regular basis and a reference guide for intervention was written. Routine screening of cases of elder abuse is also at the heart of this project and is done systematically with clients that are age of 65 years and over. Depending on the risk factors identified at the moment of the admission of the patient, a code is assigned to indicate the urgency of the situation and the maximum time of response that should be aimed for. An evaluation form was also developed to allow practitioners to note indicators of abuse, which constitute the basis of the intervention plan. Finally, awareness development in the general public is addressed and various tools are used to collect data (e.g. screening, intervention and review plans) in order to improve the assessment of risk factors that predispose to abuse.

DISCUSSION

The discussion is integrated with the Results section presented above.

CONCLUSION

The ANE project is now part of all specialized services for the senior clientele at the JFSSC. Procedures and forms have been developed for the detection and evaluation of elder abuse, as well as for treatment of the patient in these situations, which provide a structured approach and therefore better protection for seniors who are at risk of experiencing such situations.

AVENUES FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

Avenues for practice are not explicitly mentioned in the text, but screening tools are provided in the appendix.

DRAFTING DATE

August 21, 2013

