



## Research on mistreatment of older adults in Quebec:

summaries of scientific articles



### The Mistreatment of Older Adults in Long Term Care Institutions: A Study Using a Qualitative Method.

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#### REFERENCE

Beaulieu, M. (1993). The Mistreatment of Older Adults in Long Term Care Institutions: A Study Using a Qualitative Methode. *Revue Canadienne du Vieillessement/ Canadian Journal on Aging*, 12(2), 166-181.

#### TEXT TYPE

**Format:** Scientific article

**Content:** Methodological

#### DISCUSSED THEMES

Definition, forms of abuse in nursing homes, laws, prevention, screening, intervention, methodology.

#### GOAL OR RESEARCH QUESTION

The article provides a reflection on the scope and the limits of a qualitative research method in the field of aging. To do this, the article outlines the approach of a study on elder abuse in nursing homes. It also raises questions related to the research approach, as well as reflections on the production of knowledge.

#### PROBLEM

The qualitative work is resurfacing in humanities, among others, in the field of aging, after an era of research that focused on quantitative methods (from the 30s to the 60s). However, it must respond to many criticisms to prove their scientific validity. This return to qualitative methods is, therefore, built into a period of social transformation and the research on elder abuse takes part in this renewal.

#### METHODOLOGY

This article is based on a qualitative study conducted with about thirty managers and directors of services in nursing homes in order to identify their definition of abuse and their practice of intervention with such a problem. Data collection is carried out through semi-structured interviews conducted in a non-directive manner and aimed at representing services for seniors as a whole. This study then serves as a basis for a critical reflection on the use of the method in qualitative research.

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## RESULTS

This study highlights different definitions of abuse. It shows that managers want the prioritization of the intervention regarding elder abuse and staff training, while being divided on the relevance to equip themselves with clear intervention procedures. It is also clear from the analysis that several managers are working for seniors, but without seeing them. In addition, they denounce both the individual and the institutional abuse, but few solutions are provided regarding this last type of abuse. Following this study, the board of directors of the *Corporation des centres d'accueil Laval* (the Corporation of nursing homes in Laval) took a quick look back at the validation of constructions from the analysis which was very helpful. Members have even decided to integrate the prevention and detection of abuse in their objectives for the following year.

## DISCUSSION

This qualitative research may help to understand the intervention practice only in similar circles and cannot be generalized to the entire nursing home network for seniors in Quebec. In addition, it should be taken into account that the managers surveyed were already aware of the problem and therefore that the results would not be the same in another environment. A validation of the constructions was made in order to ensure that they do not distort the initial comments. It also avoids the trap of drawing organizational conclusions without regard to the characteristics of the environment by focusing on the psychosocial aspect rather than medical or management aspects. In this sense, the qualitative analysis has brought to light some aspects more than others, which is both an advantage and a limit.

## CONCLUSION

This research approach puts forward the direct impact of epistemological and theoretical concerns on the definition of the research topic and the choice of method. In this case, the qualitative method has allowed us to study the problem of elder abuse in nursing homes and to develop the comprehensive theory of the intervention practice in this environment. In the field of aging, it is used to collect the nuanced opinion of various actors and aims at understanding their respective points of view, while promoting the intergenerational dialogue. Finally, such qualitative studies stimulate a growing awareness of the challenges of intervention and lead to the questioning of current intervention policies and practices.

## AVENUES FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

The author proposes to carry out qualitative studies with elder abusers as an avenue for future research. She also considers the use of qualitative methods for the analysis of social policies, in order to contribute to the advancement of knowledge on aging.

## DRAFTING DATE

August 27, 2013

