



Research on mistreatment of older adults in Quebec:

summaries of scientific articles



An Update on Elder Abuse and Neglect.

REFERENCE

Vida, S. (1994). An Update on Elder Abuse and Neglect. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 39(8), S34-S40.

TEXT TYPE

Format: Scientific article

Content: Theoretical

DISCUSSED THEMES

Definition, extent of the phenomenon forms of abuse at home and in residential settings, risk factors, vulnerabilities, authors of abuse, barriers to reporting, laws, procedure, burden and stress.

GOAL OR RESEARCH QUESTION

This article presents a definition of the phenomenon of elder abuse, the incidence and prevalence of the problem, a description of risk factors and the evolution in legislation regarding this issue. It also suggests avenues for intervention and research.

PROBLEM

Elder abuse, although a new issue, is a topic that is increasingly present in the medical, social, public policy and legislation fields. Moreover, most jurisdictions in North America have introduced laws to address this social problem.

METHODOLOGY

No Methodology section is presented in this article.

RESULTS

Elder abuse manifests itself in various forms (physical, psychological, financial or material, neglect and violation of rights) and affects around 4% of seniors living at home.

Many features may predispose a senior person to become a victim of abuse, including poor mental and physical health, depression, disruptive behavior, social dysfunction, aggression, violence and past or current threats to the aggressor. However, some authors suggest that acts of abuse may be associated more with the characteristics of the caregiver, such as the presence of psychopathology and psychiatric diseases. Risk factors can also be analyzed in terms of the relationship between the victim and the caregiver, the living situation of the senior or the form of abuse.

In terms of legislation, protection schemes exist to protect incapable persons. In Quebec, incapacity is divided into two categories: incapacity for property and for personal care. Legislation must find a balance between protection and rights of seniors. Several acts may be prosecuted according to the Criminal Code, although several obstacles hinder such steps.

DISCUSSION

The discussion is integrated with the Results section presented above.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, current knowledge on abuse and neglect of older adults presents some shortcomings, which are important to address.

AVENUES FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

The author suggests greater use of multidisciplinary teams, focusing on detection, addressing physical and mental signs, assessing the degree of danger, and taking the time to properly fill out documentation which can serve as legal evidence. He proposes the establishment of different measures in order to reduce the presence of risk factors and vulnerability factors found in abusive situations.

He also proposes expanding research to physical abuse, violation of rights, victimization, as well as intervention and outcomes. He recommends the use of structured instruments and appropriate sampling methods. In addition, he believes that any conclusions drawn about risk factors should be derived from case-controlled studies or prospective longitudinal cohort studies, in order to distinguish predisposing or precipitating factors from simple correlations. He puts forward the analysis of statistical power in order to avoid errors due to small sample size. Finally, in order to improve the effectiveness of prevention and intervention strategies, the author proposes evaluative research relating to method, to cost and outcomes of intervention programs and to training for providers of primary health care.

DRAFTING DATE

June 05, 2014

