



Research on mistreatment of older adults in Quebec:

summaries of scientific articles



Responding to Mistreatment in Long Term Care Institutions: Individual and Collective Responsibility.

REFERENCE

Beaulieu, M. (1994). Responding to Mistreatment in Long Term Care Institutions: Individual and Collective Responsibility. *Le G rontophile Journal*, 16(4), 35-40.

TEXT TYPE

Format: Scientific article

Content: Empirical

DISCUSSED THEMES

Forms of abuse (in natural environment and nursing homes), risk factors, vulnerability factors, profile of the abused person, perpetrators of abuse, consequences, explanatory theories, laws, prevention, screening, intervention, burden and stress, training.

GOAL OR RESEARCH QUESTION

This article sheds a new light on the problem of elder abuse in public nursing homes, in particular the definition of abuse from the managers' point of view as well as their reaction to situations of abuse within their facilities. This article will give a better insight into their representations of prevention, screening and intervention.

PROBLEM

Little has been written specifically on the problem of abuse in institutions. Based on available information, nurses would be both at the origin of some situations of abuse, but also in the best position to respond. It is also noted that major abuses in institution are the result of poor management, but the general explanations of elder abuse also apply for institutional abuse.

METHODOLOGY

This comprehensive study has been carried out through 29 semi-structured interviews (conducted in a non-directive manner) with managers of a corporation of public nursing homes, chosen to represent services for seniors as a whole. The production of data and the analysis are carried out by the approach of constant comparison from one interview to the other.

RESULTS

Managers define two types of abuse: the individual responsibility and the institutional responsibility. According to them, the prevention consists of two forms: the transformation of individual behaviours and the transformation of the philosophy or institutional practices. Managers further developed on the detection of abuse as individual responsibilities, including an increased attention to any manifestation of abuse, but also to the behaviour of residents and to the comments of their families. The intervention in cases of abuse is also viewed only under the angle of the individual responsibility and is based on the seriousness of the conduct and the employee's record. Managers do not agree on whether or not they wish to see strict intervention rules regarding abuse, but everyone feels that the institution should demonstrate its willingness to respond.

DISCUSSION

The author asks herself why managers neglect to talk about screening of abuse as an institutional responsibility. She makes two assumptions: managers believe that this type of abuse is not detectable or then they feel powerless to address these situations. According to the results of this research, managers often favoured the direct approach with the employee responsible for the abuse, but they do not care much about the intervention with the older adult who suffered from abuse. This non-intervention has often been denounced in the criminological literature and is reported as a significant deficiency.

CONCLUSION

This study outlines a specific phase of the development of the intervention against elder abuse in institutions. It must be noted that managers give greater meaning to their intervention efforts that are often focused on the abuser rather than the victim. Managers surveyed also consider the organizational context as a source of abuse, especially because of the strict rules which ensure that the residents have little control over their lives. Several findings of this study can be generalized to all nursing home networks for seniors.

AVENUES FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

The author thinks the problem of elder abuse should not be hidden, but rather addressed by all. She believes that institutions would benefit from further reflection on what is acceptable or not regarding the intervention with the residents in order to develop a philosophy of action that will guide the activities as a whole. Finally, the author brings up the necessity to train managers and employees, especially for screening and intervention in the case of abuse against seniors.

DRAFTING DATE

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