



Research on mistreatment of older adults in Quebec:

summaries of scientific articles



Some Reflections on the Mistreatment and Neglect of Older Adults.

REFERENCE

Nahmiash, D. (1995). Some Reflections on the Mistreatment and Neglect of Older Adults. *Service social*, 44(2), 111-128.

TEXT TYPE

Format: Scientific article

Content: Literature review

DISCUSSED THEMES

Definition, extent of the phenomenon, forms of mistreatment at home, risk factors, vulnerability factors, profile of the abused person, authors of abuse, barriers to reporting, explanatory theories, prevention, detection, intervention, organization of services, burden and stress, cultural aspects, success factors and barriers to effective services.

GOAL OR RESEARCH QUESTION

This article offers a review of the literature dealing specifically with the subject of abuse and neglect by unremunerated caregivers of seniors living in their natural environment. It seeks to clarify the extent of the phenomenon, the characteristics of the victims and perpetrators, as well as the explanations for their behavior.

PROBLEM

Since 1980, particular attention is paid to the phenomenon of abuse and neglect of seniors. In 1989, the first study on the topic was conducted in Canada. The first government report relating to this issue was published the same year in Quebec. Seniors can be abused at home, in residential settings or when living homeless.

METHODOLOGY

No Methodology section is included in this article.

RESULTS

The prevalence of abuse and neglect is estimated at 4%. The victims mainly report situations involving either financial abuse or constant verbal abuse. The incidence of abuse is between 7.1% and 10.4%. Violence by informal caregivers often takes the form of emotional or financial abuse. Abused seniors are very often women, widows, in poor health, of advanced age, with substance abuse problems or in poor housing conditions. They may also suffer from depression, dementia, addiction, isolation, lack of social support or have unrealistic expectations of the caregiver.

The abusers often have substance abuse problems, mental or emotional disorders, lack experience in providing for care or are repulsed at the idea of the task. They often have a history of violence, a dependency relationship with the senior that is receiving care and problems of confusion or dementia. They are often exhausted or stressed, lack social support and have personality traits such as excessive control, blame and criticism and a lack of compassion. In addition to the characteristics of the victim and the aggressor, it is noted that the social context in which assistance is given by the caregiver and cultural norms have a significant influence on the occurrence of abusive situations. The issue of elder abuse can be explained through various approaches, and intervention strategies are numerous. It is mentioned that strategies focused on the person and those oriented towards training and counseling of caregivers are very successful.

DISCUSSION

The discussion is integrated within the Results section above.

CONCLUSION

The literature review shows that abuse and neglect are important issues for seniors living in the community. Social workers should be able to detect these cases on the basis of a sound knowledge of the phenomenon and by the use of appropriate tools and indicators.

AVENUES FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

In terms of prevention, the author suggests that interest be focused as much on potential aggressors as on potential or actual victims. Social policy should take into account the context in which assistance is given, as it may indirectly contribute to the emergence of situations of abuse or neglect.

DRAFTING DATE

August 30, 2013

