



Research on mistreatment of older adults in Quebec:

summaries of scientific articles



Powerlessness and Abuse and Neglect of Older Adults.

REFERENCE

Nahmiash, D. (2002). Powerlessness and Abuse and Neglect of Older Adults. *Journal of Elder Abuse and Neglect*, 14(1), 21-47.

TEXT TYPE

Format: Scientific article

Content: Empirical

DISCUSSED THEMES

Definition, forms of abuse at home, risk factors, vulnerabilities, concept of gender, profile of the mistreated person, perpetrators of abuse, consequences, barriers to reporting, explanatory theories, intervention, burden and stress, cultural aspects, powerlessness.

GOAL OR RESEARCH QUESTION

This study primarily explores the interactions between the environmental context, situations of abuse and neglect of older adults living in community.

PROBLEM

Although some acts of abuse are perpetrated by paid caregivers, unpaid caregivers are involved in the majority of abuse cases of older adults. Furthermore, few studies have investigated to date the interaction between contextual factors and situations of abuse or neglect of older adults. Yet, this aspect is important for both social policy and practice.

METHODOLOGY

Interviews were conducted with fourteen victims of abuse or neglect as well as with two perpetrators of abuse in order to highlight their past and present situation, their roles and relationships as well as the process of loss of power. Interviews were then analyzed according to a historical, gender, cultural, ecological and critical perspective.

RESULTS

Several cases are presented to illustrate the diversity of factors that interact, thus inducing the older adult in a situation of powerlessness specific to situations of abuse. It has been shown that history, gender, culture, social and environmental factors as well as current interventions and practices have an important role in situations of abuse experienced by older adults in the community.

DISCUSSION

For each of the cases, the interaction of various factors related to the macrosystem, the exosystem, the mesosystem and the microsystem helps contribute to the sense of powerlessness of the older adult, leaving room to situations of abuse and neglect.

CONCLUSION

In essence, violence against older adults in a context of care is generated by the interaction of different systems and major events. Following the analysis of various cases of abuse, it appears that each dyad was in a situation of powerlessness related to various events and systemic influences and that the majority was in a codependency relationship. Thus, interventions with older adults experiencing an issue of abuse are very complex and require an understanding and the implementation of various intervention strategies related to various systems, policies, beliefs and values.

AVENUES FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

It would be appropriate to further explore problems emanating from the fact that several societies produce an environment in which violence, abuse and neglect of older adults is tolerated in accordance with negative attitudes, policies, practices and systems regarding the intervention with their clientele. In order to alleviate this situation, developing a stronger and stable vision of old age would be essential. Moreover, one should be aware of the great importance of the response given to older adults who are experiencing changes at the physical level as well as to their families.

DRAFTING DATE

December 13, 2013

