




Research on mistreatment of older adults in Quebec:

summaries of scientific articles



The Protection of Older Adults from Exploitation. Critical Analysis of the Report “Exploitation of the Elderly, Towards a Narrow Safety Net”. Report of Consultation and Recommendations. Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse. October, 2001.

REFERENCE

Beaulieu, M. (2002). The Protection of Older Adults from Exploitation. Critical Analysis of the Report “Exploitation of the Elderly, Towards a Narrow Safety Net”. Report of Consultation and Recommendations. Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse. Octobre 2001. *Gérontophile*, 24(2). 34-39.

TEXT TYPE

Format: Scientific article

Content: Critical analysis of a report

DISCUSSED THEMES

Risk factors, laws, prevention, intervention, public policy.

GOAL OR RESEARCH QUESTION

This article first presents a critical summary of a report on the exploitation of the elderly entitled “*L’exploitation des personnes âgées*”, published in October 2001 by the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse (the Quebec Commission on Human Rights and Youth Rights - CDPDJ). In the second part, the author explores and reflects on the social issue of the protection of seniors.

PROBLEM

In Quebec, there is no specific legislation on the protection of seniors. Since 1976, Article 48 of the *Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* provides that seniors and disabled people are entitled to be protected against exploitation and to receive protection and security from their families or persons in the place of parents. In Quebec, the CDPDJ is mandated to ensure the promotion and the respect of the articles of the Charter. In 2000, it conducted a broad public consultation on Article 48, following which, in October 2001, the above-mentioned, 194-page report on the exploitation of the elderly was published.

METHODOLOGY

No Methodology section is presented in this article.

RESULTS

The first part of the report focuses on «elder abuse», which is sometimes translated as “abus envers les aînés”, an expression that the author finds inadequate. Rather, she suggests the use of the expressions « mauvais traitements » et « maltraitance ». The second part of the report discusses existing protection measures in relation to elder abuse and their shortcomings. The author draws a parallel with the protection measures for women who are victims of violence.

Corrective actions are presented in the third part of the report, in the form of forty-eight recommendations and four commitments. These commitments are the priorities that give meaning to all of the recommendations presented in the report. The first commitment, which consists of the establishment of an information campaign on the role of CDPDJ, leads the author to question whether Article 48 is actually not sufficiently known, or rather, not called upon, due to an unsatisfactory result. The author reacts to the second commitment presented in the report, that the CDPDJ review its position on the sexualisation of positions in health care facilities and social services, by maintaining that the value of respect and dignity are not related to sex, but to the axiological framework of each individual. The third commitment is to assess the effects of confidentiality rules on intervention with seniors experiencing abuse. The author believes that the exchange of information is essential to ensure that practitioners are aware of ongoing developments in the field of elder abuse. The fourth commitment, which consists of proceeding to a follow-up study of the recommendations presented in this report, leads the author to question whether the CDPDJ will be responsible only for assessment or will undertake some changes itself.

The author believes that to ensure adequate protection for seniors experiencing abuse, the *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* should be amended and completed with a campaign aimed at awareness and at the promotion of Article 48 among practitioners, but also with a more concerted response from the CDPDJ and other involved organizations.

DISCUSSION

The discussion is integrated to the Results section presented above.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the author is pleased by the efforts that are made in the report to better identify and define the problem of elder abuse. However, she is outraged that mistreatment of seniors is not viewed as a problem which is due to the tolerance of violence.

AVENUES FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

The author proposes that political intervention concerning elder abuse be developed by drawing on existing policy in the field of domestic violence. She suggests that an organization like the CDPDJ or a government department take the initiative in this matter and that all regions develop intersectoral tables on violence, where the CDPDJ would have a central role. In addition, she believes that the CDPDJ should follow up with practitioners in other organizations that refer cases of abuse to it. Finally, she believes that clarifying the role of CDPDJ is necessary.

DRAFTING DATE

May 08, 2014

