



Research on mistreatment of older adults in Quebec:

summaries of scientific articles



Responding to the Needs of Older Women Experiencing Domestic Violence.

REFERENCE

Straka, S.M. & Montminy, L. (2006). Responding to the Needs of Older Women Experiencing Domestic Violence. *Violence Against Women*, 12(3), 251-267.

TEXT TYPE

Format: Scientific article

Content: Literature reviews

DISCUSSED THEMES

Forms of mistreatment at home, vulnerabilities, concept of gender, profile of the mistreated person, barriers to reporting, explanatory theories, law, intervention, burden and stress, training, socialization according to gender.

GOAL OR RESEARCH QUESTION

The purpose of this article is to present a review of the literature concerning the problem of violence against older women. Two perspectives will be covered: domestic violence and mistreatment of older adults.

PROBLEM

Domestic violence against older women is a real issue which becomes a growing challenge with the aging population. However, little is known specifically about this subject and we do not know how to adequately meet these women's needs. This lack of knowledge can be explained, in part, by the fact that the problem falls into the gap between the following: domestic violence and mistreatment of older adults.

METHODOLOGY

No methodology section is presented in this article.

RESULTS

Within the feminist paradigm, domestic violence is perceived as a social problem and requires a structural explanation. Moreover, this issue has been defined by women themselves and is based on the dynamics of gender-power relations. However, it is difficult to meet the specific needs of older women who are victims of domestic violence, because the feminist dominant discourse has been dominated by younger women. In the paradigm of mistreatment of older adults, it is perceived as the result of the caregiver's work overload. The problem was first defined by health professionals and is built around the risk and vulnerability concepts.

DISCUSSION

The feminist domestic violence paradigm brings various forces, including the structural analysis of gender-power relations, the specificity of the activities and the approach based on empowerment. However, major domestic violence resources are poorly suited to meet the age-specific needs of older women in situations of domestic violence. This is quite different for the paradigm of mistreatment of older adults; its main force lies in the adequate response to the needs related to aging. Efforts are however focused on the older adult's physical health and on the caregiver's competence, without paying attention to gender or the need to tailor interventions in a domestic violence context. There is a consensus in developing an integrated approach that would include both domestic violence resources and mistreatment against older adults.

CONCLUSION

For the authors, interventions with older women in a domestic violence context must consider the liberationist and empowerment principles shared by feminists as well as the age and gender dimensions of oppression or vulnerability. In order to do so, it is imperative to understand how these older women have gone through their own experiences, and to identify the contributions and the limits of the approaches which contribute to the intervention with this clientele.

AVENUES FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

In addition to providing a better understanding of these women's experiences and approaches recommended, the freedom of older women's expression should take precedence in order to develop resources and interventions best suited to their needs. It is also essential to better understand the current situation and the way the paradigms of feminist domestic violence and mistreatment can coexist in a practice setting.

DRAFTING DATE

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