



Research on mistreatment of older adults in Quebec: summaries of scientific articles



Moving forward : Prevention of Abuse of Older Women in the Post-Immigration Context in Canada.

REFERENCE

Matsuoka, A., Guruge, S., Koehn, S., Beaulieu, M., Ploeg, J., Lithwick, M., ... Gomes, F. (2013). Moving forward : Prevention of Abuse of Older Women in the Post-Immigration Context in Canada. Canadian Review of Social Policies, 68-69. 107-120.

TEXT TYPE

Format: Scientific article

Content: political analysis

DISCUSSED THEMES

Cultural aspects; Definition; Extent of the phenomenon; Factors of vulnerability; Person who mistreats; Public policy; The concept of gender; Types of mistreatment in community-dwelling.

GOAL OR RESEARCH QUESTION

This paper reports on the findings of a project that aims to develop a research program focused on the prevention of mistreatment immigrant women in Canada. This article focuses specifically on the current sociopolitical context and examines the implications of family ideology in policies to prevent mistreatment of older adults.

PROBLEM

Immigrants make up 28% of the Canadian population over the age of 65, and immigrant women make up the bulk of the aging population in major Canadian cities. Few studies have explored the mistreatment experienced by these older immigrant women in Canada. Moreover, up to now, no national prevalence study has been carried out on the phenomenon. These women appear to be invisible and vulnerable in society. The ideology of the family presented in social policy also contributes to perpetuating the conditions conducive to situations of mistreatment. This ideology integrates the notion of individualism and leads to minimum intervention of the state, thus leaving a great responsibility to the families to care for and to answer to the needs of older immigrant women.

METHODOLOGY

No methodology is presented in this article.

RESULTS

The project identifies five key areas in which prevention measures of the mistreatment of older adults should be developed: immigration, employability or income security, education, housing, and health and social services.

The immigration process: The current family reunification program in Canada is helping to increase the number of immigrant women living without documentation and without legal status within its borders, making them more vulnerable to mistreatment within their family and on the labour market. For good reason, the 10-year financial commitment undertaken by the immigrants' relatives under this program encourages a clandestine alternative. Changes to this program are therefore necessary to prevent situations of mistreatment which these immigrant women may experience.

Employability or income security: The lowest income among older adult immigrants in Canada compared to the older adults born locally is now well documented. The lack of financial resources increases the vulnerability of immigrant older adults to mistreatment because they are more dependent on the resources of their adult children than their Canadian-born peers.

Education: Prevention of mistreatment involves several aspects of education: (1) the education of professionals in intercultural intervention, but also of society concerning cultural differentiation, and (2) the education of older immigrant women, particularly by the acquisition of the official language of the host country. Indeed, comprehension of the language partially removes cultural barriers and facilitates access to health care and various social services. In addition to providing access to information, the ability to communicate breaks social isolation. Both factors contribute to preventing the mistreatment of older adults.

Housing: Canadian literature suggests that older immigrants generally tend to live more frequently with their families than alone. This situation makes them all the more dependent on the financial, material and human resources of their families, which increases the risk of mistreatment.

Health care and social services: Immigrants in general, and older immigrant women in particular, face barriers to accessibility, availability and the ability to financially afford care. These structural limitations create a gap in care for these women, which is close to neglect, and places undue pressure on family members to receive the services they need in order to maintain a decent quality of life.

DISCUSSION

The discussion is included with the results presented above.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study demonstrate the need for intersectoral collaboration between the fields of immigration, employment and income security, education, housing, health and social services to prevent the mistreatment of older women in post-migration contexts in Canada.

AVENUES FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

Several recommendations are put forward in this article to develop and implement various services to prevent mistreatment and to intervene with older immigrant women in such situations: intersectoral collaboration; the need to reach older immigrant women as well as the perpetrators of mistreatment; the use of intercultural and intergenerational approaches; and the use of the media to disseminate information on the mistreatment of older immigrant women.

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