Abuse and Neglect of Older People in Ireland

Report on the National Study of Elder Abuse and Neglect

8th November 2010
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Report on the National Study of Elder Abuse and Neglect

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8th November 2010
Study Aims

- Context of Elder Abuse
- Study Aims
- Methodology
- Results
- Summary
- Future
Elder Abuse

Timeless phenomenon of inter-personal violence (WHO 2002),

- *In Mark 7:10-12*, Pharisees had made void the law of God by their disgraceful treatment of the elderly.

- *In Proverbs 23:22*, Solomon exhorts his son to "harken to your father who begot you and do not despise your mother when she is old."
1970s – Known as ‘Granny battering’ or ‘Granny bashing’ (Burston 1975; Baker 1977)

1981 US Select Committee on ageing ‘Elder Abuse; examination of the hidden problem’

Unrecognised and hidden from public view

1992 Council of Europe ‘Violence against Elderly People’
"A single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person or violates their human and civil rights"
Developments in Elder Abuse in Ireland


- Protecting Our Future report (DOHC 2002)
  - Recommendations
    - Services to protect older people
    - Staff training
    - Public awareness
    - Research
Elder Abuse Structures in Ireland

Department of Health & Children

Senior Case Workers (29) – Health Area Office (investigate/help)

4 Dedicated Elder Abuse Officers

Voluntary Groups

HSE – National Elder Abuse Steering Group

4 Subcommittees
Training, Public awareness, Communication, Policies/procedures

HSE Information Helpline

NCPOP
Research Educational resource

Garda
Prevalence of Elder Abuse

- How big a problem is this in Ireland?

- Official Statistics - reported cases of Elder Abuse to HSE
  - 2008: 1481, 0.03%
  - 2009: 1870, 0.04%

- Tip of the Iceberg: 1:14, 1:20 cases go unreported to official services
The prevalence of

- Overall abuse & individual types of abuse
- Perpetrated by people in a position of trust (family, paid care workers, close friends)
- In the previous twelve months
- Community-dwelling older people

- Since 65 years
- Wider community

- Risk profile of older people who experience mistreatment
- Profile of Perpetrators
- Impact & Response
Measuring Prevalence of Abuse

- **Definition**
  WHO 2002 “a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person or violates their human and civil rights”

- **Population**
  - Community-dwelling (excluded residential)
  - Aged 65 years or older

- **Time period**
  - In the previous 12 months
  - Since the age of 65 years
Measuring Prevalence of Abuse

- **Type of abuse**
  - Physical abuse
  - Sexual abuse
  - Psychological abuse
  - Financial abuse
  - Neglect (by omission or commission)
  - Discriminatory abuse, Self neglect, Abandonment, Institutional Abuse

- **Impact**
  - Serious
  - Moderate
  - Not Serious
Measuring Prevalence of Abuse

- **Position of Trust**
  - Family, Professional carers, Close friend
  - Neighbours, Acquaintances
  - Strangers

- **Risk Factors**
  - Demographic
  - Health
  - Socio-economic
  - Social Support
In the previous 12-months

- **Financial** ≥1 incident money or possessions stolen, forced to sign over property, change will
- **Physical** ≥1 incidents slapped, pushed, restrained
- **Sexual** ≥1 incident sexually spoken to touched
- **Psychological** ≥10 incidents or serious impact insulted, threatened, excluded, prevented seeing people
- **Neglect** ≥10 incidents or serious impact refusal or failure of carer to help with activities of daily living such as shopping, washing or dressing
- **Position of trust** Family, close friends, care workers

Inter-personal abuse
Methodology

- Ethical approval UCD Health Sciences Ethics committee
- Sample Size 2000
- Multi-stage cluster random probability sample
  - 7 Regions- 150 Electrical Divisions (proportion of older people Census 2006)
  - Rural, small, moderate, large urban centres
  - 14 individual interviews in each ED (only one person per household)
- Random route finding, pre-identified random selected starting address
- Quota controls for age and gender
  - Males & Females stratified into 3 age groups
  - Age groups (65-69 years, 70-79 years, ≥ 80 years)
Methodology

- Face-to-face interviews in person’s home
- All interviewers older women-specific training
- All interviews in private
- Informed consent, open disclosure (only to eligible participant)
- Paper questionnaire
  - Socio-demographic
  - Health- Short form 8 (SF-8)
  - Social Support - Oslo Social Support scale
  - Experiences of financial, physical, psychological and sexual abuse, and neglect (UK & US Studies)
  - Impact of & response to mistreatment
  - Perpetrator Characteristics

- **Response Rate- 83% (2021 interviews)**
  - Total Household calls n=5658, (not, unknown, eligible)
Results | Population Characteristics

Demographics
- Male 45%, Female 55%
- Age (mean) 74 years
- White Irish 98%

Socio-economics
- Professional/managerial/Non-manual 47%
- Manual (skilled, semi-skilled, unskilled, other) 53%

Health
- Good 45%
- Poor 5%
- Assistant with activities of daily living 18%

Strong Social Support
- Community 59%
- Family 91%
Results II Mistreatment Prevalence

- Prevalence of mistreatment was **2.2 %** (95% CI 1.41, 2.94)
- Population **10,201** (6598, 13,757)

![Mistreatment Types Chart]

- Clustering of abuse: 25% (psychological abuse)
Results III Age & Gender

- **Women** 2.4% (interpersonal, financial abuse)
- **Men** 1.9% (Interpersonal abuse)
- **Age ≥ 80 years** 2.5% (Financial abuse)

![Graph showing percentage of mistreatment by age and gender]
Results IV Living Circumstances

- Complex/intergenerational households 3.4%
  Vs single/couples 1.9%
- Divorced/ separated 3.7%, widowed 2.8%
  Vs single 1.3%

Living arrangements

- Alone
- Spouse/partner
- Spouse + Other
- Adult child + Other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living arrangements</th>
<th>Financial</th>
<th>Interpersonal</th>
<th>Neglect</th>
<th>Any Mistreatment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse/partner</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse + Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult child + Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Mistreatment</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Older people in all education, social groups & income experienced mistreatment

- Lower Education
- Manual social groups
- Lower Incomes
Perceived and measured health was strongly correlated with mistreatment

- Below average physical health: 3.6% vs 1.1%
- Below average mental health: 5.7% vs 0.9%
People who disclosed abuse accounted for a high proportion of formal community service users.
Nearly 100% of people who disclosed mistreatment visited their GP
Results VIII Social Support

- Poor family or community support 3-4 times more likely to report mistreatment
- women (interpersonal & financial abuse)

Community & Family Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart showing comparison between community and family support levels.
Results IX Perpetrators

- Adult Children 50% of the over mistreatment
  - Financial abuse 47%
  - Interpersonal abuse 50%

Relationship of Perpetrator to the Older Person
Results IX Perpetrators

- Adult Children 50% of the over mistreatment
  - Financial abuse 47%
  - Interpersonal abuse 50%

Perpetrator Characteristics

- Own Home 77%
- Age 31-64 60%
- Unemployment 51%
- Male 48%
- Living with old person 37%
- Addiction (alcohol/drugs) 21%
84% perceived mistreatment had a very serious impact

- Physical/Sexual abuse: 100%
- Financial abuse: 89%
- Psychological Abuse: 68%
- Neglect: 50%

Response to Mistreatment
Results XI Alternative Definition

Mistreatment wider Community (12-mth)

- Any Mistreatment 2.9%
  - Financial 1.8%
  - Psychological 1.7%
  - Physical/Sexual 0.7%
  - Neglect 0.3%

Any mistreatment since 65 years

- Any Mistreatment 4%
  - Psychological 2.4%
  - Financial 1.4%
  - Neglect 1.2%
  - Physical/Sexual 0.7%
Any mistreatment since 65 years
Any Mistreatment 4%
Psychological 2.4%
Financial 1.4%
Neglect 1.2%
Physical/Sexual 0.7%
Mistreatment wider Community (12-mth)
Any Mistreatment 2.9%
Financial 1.8%
Psychological 1.7%
Physical/Sexual 0.7%
Neglect 0.3%
Perpetrator relationship to older person
Adult child 33%
Spouse/partner 13%
Stranger 13%
Health Care Worker 1%
Other relatives 16%
Friend 2%
Neighbours/acquaintance 24%
Summary

- 12-month prevalence of abuse & neglect 2.2%

- Over 10,000 people
  - Older person characteristics
    - Female
    - Age
    - Lower socio-economic circumstances
    - Health especially mental health
    - Social isolation
  - Perpetrator characteristics
    - Adult Children
    - Male
    - Middle age
    - Unemployment
    - Addiction
Risk Groups

Low Income

Poor Health

Socially Isolated

Domestic Violence

Environmental Factors
Risk Groups

The majority of us will not experience elder abuse & neglect
But we all have the potential
How do we compare?

National prevalence studies of elder abuse & neglect

12-Month Prevalence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ireland 2010</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA 2010</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel 2009</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain 2008</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK 2007</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany 1996</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada 1992</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How big is the problem?

- 12 mth Position of trust: 2.2%
- 12 mth wider community: 2.9%
- Age 65 yrs & POT: 4.0%
- Age 65 yrs wider community: 5.5%
How big is the problem?

12 mth Position of trust: 2.2%
12 mth wider community: 2.9%
Age 65 yrs & POT: 4.0%
Age 65 yrs wider community: 5.5%

10,201 | 13,429 | 18,764 | 25,735
What can we do?

**Early Risk Factors**
- Awareness & Information
- Education
- Boundaries of acceptable behaviour
- Health
- Financial affairs
- Social Welfare
- Housing
- Public Transport

**Late Risk Factors**
- Dedicated services
- Training
- Screening
- Appropriate acceptable response options
- Service and intervention evaluation
- Advocacy / Policing
- Inter & Intra agency co-operation
- Legislation
Limitation & Future

Limitation

- Under-reporting/ non-disclosure
  - Neglect
  - Sexual abuse
- Insufficient power to identify risk factors for individual types of abuse

Future Research

- Residential mistreatment
- Qualitative interviews with older people
- Senior case workers
- Long term impact of mistreatment- longitudinal studies
- Interventions including technology for older people
Acknowledgements

• The older people who participated in the pilot & survey
• The Amarach team & the interviewers for their persistence and sensitivity
• External Experts: Professor Karl Pilmer, Professor Simon Biggs, Dr Isobel Marmolejo
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• HSE steering & management committee,
• NCPOP User group,
• The NCPOP research team
• Professor Hannah McGee (RCSI) & Dr Dorothy Watson (ERSI), Dr Mark Lach (Cornell University) for sharing their advise & experiences with us
Forewarned is forearmed

www.ncpop.ie
Report Launch

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The National Study of Elder Abuse and Neglect

Implications and New Directions

Prof. Karl Pillemer, Cornell University
Presentation delivered in University College Dublin, 8th November 2010
Recent Headlines

Elder abuse on rise
Economy adds to family stresses; Budget cuts limit options for care

Man gets 28 months in elder abuse case

Former nurse's aide pleads guilty to abuse

Long Beach Insurance Agent Charged with Grand Theft, Elder Abuse

Elder neglect trial begins with images of 'filth'
Strengths of the Ireland Study

- National focus
- Size
- Excellent response rate
- Extensive interview
The Extent of Elder Abuse

- A prevalent problem
- Likely to be encountered routinely in clinical practice
What Causes Elder Mistreatment?

- What places someone at risk of being an elder abuse victim?
- What places someone at risk of being an elder abuser?
A Risk Profile

- Shared living arrangement
- Social isolation
- Substance abuse and other problems in perpetrators
- Health issues of the elder
Implications for Intervention

- Studies need of abuse in care facilities
- “Early warning systems” for financial exploitation
- Public awareness campaigns
Do you call this respect?

Every day, older Vermonters are being threatened, neglected and hurt. These are all forms of elder abuse. Make today different. If you know someone who is being neglected, exploited or abused, report it to Adult Protective Services at 1-800-564-1612.

You'll find help & respect.

For information about services or referrals, call the Senior Helpline at 1-800-642-5119.
Implications for Intervention

- Multi-component interventions
  - Better case coordination
Manhattan Elder Abuse Case Coordination and Review Team

- Coordinates and review cases of elder abuse and neglect
- Involves multiple organizations to coordinate assessment and intervention
- Includes experts from social services, legal services, geriatrics, Adult Protective Services, and law enforcement
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