

Elder Abuse


What forms of abuse do older adults experience in rest homes and community settings?

Elder abuse is a major public health issue in New Zealand and worldwide. As our population ages, elder abuse is going to become a greater problem therefore it is important for the general population as well as health professionals to have more of an awareness and understanding on this issue.

Elder abuse requires more attention and awareness to help identify and prevent it from happening.

Elder abuse is defined as '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' (Action on Elder Abuse, 2004).

Implications

 Age Concern New Zealand's elder abuse and neglect services reported between the years of 1998 and 2001 the forms of abuse occurring were:

Psychological abuse 56%


Financial/material abuse 46%


Physical abuse 2%

Neglect including active and passive 18%

Sexual abuse 3%

(Ministry of Health, 2007).

 Heath, Kobylarz, Brown & Castano (2005) revealed elder neglect is more common in the community setting and the caregivers are the perpetrators of this. Self-neglect was most prominent among the older adult population with 76% of abuse occurring, followed by caregiver neglect 47%, financial abuse 29% and physical abuse 15%.

 The Action on Elder Abuse report that psychological abuse is the most reported form of abuse, followed by financial abuse and physical abuse as third (Action on Elder Abuse, 2004).

References

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Recommendations

Raising awareness on elder abuse through education sessions within both rest home and community settings. This will enable people including the elderly to identify, manage, report and prevent abuse from happening (McGarry & Simpson, 2009).

Appropriate training for staff, specifically caregiving staff, this will aim at both rest homes and community settings.

Screen older adults for abuse when they access health services.

Screen your patient for abuse with these questions:

- Has someone hurt you?
- Did someone do this to you?
- Has anyone ever touched you without your consent?
- Does anyone yell at you or threaten you?
- Who cares for you at home?
- Are you afraid of you caregiver?

Conclusion

Elder abuse may be acted through five main categories of abuse including psychological, financial/material, physical, sexual and neglect. These five forms of abuse happen in both rest home and community settings worldwide.

According to the New Zealand Families Commission report the main form of abuse experienced by the New Zealand older adult population is neglect (Families Commission, 2008). Psychological abuse is the second most common form of abuse in both rest home and community settings.



PICOT Table

PICOT	Information related to question	Explanation
Population	Older adults 65 years and over	In New Zealand 65 years and above is classed as older adults. Research needs to be aimed at this population only
Intervention	The forms of abuse occurring in both settings within New Zealand and worldwide	Interested in research on the forms of elder abuse occurring in rest homes and older adults own homes throughout New Zealand and the world
Comparison	Forms of abuse in rest homes and community settings (older adults own homes)	Wanting to find out if there is a difference in the forms of abuse older adults experience which occur between the two settings
Outcome	The forms of abuse in each setting	Interested in knowing whether there is a difference between rest home and community settings for what forms of elder abuse occur
Time	Time is not applicable to the question therefore it is has been excluded from the search	Not applicable

Reference

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