

Prevention and Management of Elder Abuse



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Abstract

Elder abuse is violence, neglect, and other harms at elderly person. The incidence is high among dependent, above 75 years of age and women. Economic burden, emotional stress, dependency and lack of knowledge about elder abuse may contribute to abuse. Physical, psychosocial, sexual, financial abuses are the major types of abuse. Prevention and management of abuse among elder abuse is important in identifying risk groups. Family members care provider, nurse/health professionals and community have a major role to identify, manage and prevent elder abuse.

Introduction

Elder abuse is “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.”(World Health Organization).

The core feature of this definition is that it focuses on harms where there is “expectation of trust” of the older persons toward their abuser. Thus it includes harms from people the older person knows or with whom they have a relationship, such as a spouse, partner or family members, a friend or neighbors, or people that the older person relies on for services. Many forms of elder abuse are recognized as types of domestic violence or family violence.

The term elder abuse does not include general criminal activity against older persons,

such as home breakins, “muggings” in the street or “disional traction burglary”, where a stranger distracts an older person at the doorstep while another person enters the property to steal.

It is a sensitive issue in our society and a big psychosocial problem among senior citizens. It is a problem that still remains hidden from the public and even professionals. Any elderly person be a victim, but the dependents, 75 years above and women are more likely to be abused. However, abuse occurs in all cultural groups. Usually the abuser is a relative.

Incidence of Elder Abuse

Female	70 percent
Psychological abuse	59 percent
Financial abuse	42 percent
Physical abuse	12 percent
Sexual abuse	2 percent
Home abuse	64 percent
Geriatric home	23 percent
Hospital	5 percent

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/elde-abuse>)

Causes of Abuse

- Lack of knowledge and skills to care elder people

- Excessive physical work load
- Lack of training to care provider
- Financial problem
- Emotional burdens (frustration)
- Dependency
- Marital maladjustment/Alcoholism
- History of violence in family
- Economic burden

Types of Elder Abuse

- Physical abuse
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial abuse.

Physical Abuse

- It is use of force by abuser resulting in physical pain, injury, impairment.
- Not only physical assaults but also use of inappropriate drugs, restraints etc.

Emotional Abuse

People speak or treat to elderly persons in such a way that causes emotional pain or distress.

Sexual Abuse

It is contact with an elderly person without their consent. Such contact can involve physical sex acts. Activities such as showing pornographic material and forcing the person to watch sex acts, or forcing the elder to undress.

Financial Abuse

- Misuse an elder's personal checks, credit cards, or account
- Steal cash, income checks, or household goods
- Forge the elder's signature

- Announcements of a "prize" the elderly person has won but must pay to
- Investment fraud.

Signs and Symptoms (How to identify abuses in elderly persons)

Physical abuse

- Unexplained signs of injury such as bruises or scars, broken bones, sprains or dislocations
- Report of overdose or apparent failure to take medicine regularly

Financial abuse

- Steal cash, income checks, or household goods
- Changes in the elder's financial condition
- Items or cash missing from the senior's household
- Suspicious changes withdrawals from elder's accounts
- Sudden in wills, power, of attorney, titles, and policies
- Unpaid bills
- ATM withdrawal
- Unnecessary services, goods, or subscriptions
- Forge the elder's signature

Emotional Abuse

- Threatening or controlling behavior or caregiver
- Fear and anger
- Silence
- Dementia

Sexual Abuse

- Unexplained venereal disease or genital infections
- Bruises around breasts or genitals
- Unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding
- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing

Prevention of Elder Abuse

1. Listening to seniors and their care giver.
2. Interviewing when you suspect elder abuse.
3. Educating others about how to recognize and report elder
4. Legal provision, social security and advocacy.

Role of a Family Member:

Have a significance role in caring of elderly. Have basic knowledge to meet the need of the elderly.

- Watch for warning signs that might indicate elder abuse.
- Watch for possible financial abuse.
- Talk and visit as frequently as possible.
- Maintain good relationship within the family members
- Encourage to participate in decision making within the family.
- Keep them in touch with family, trusted friends or relatives
- Avoid being isolated
- Suggest, seeking legal advice for financial arrangements and decision.
- If they are going to sign a power of attorney manage for legal process.
- Try to ask their interest.

Role of a Nurse

- Have background knowledge about the older people as the complex human being with multiple and individual needs.
- Observe the relationship between family member and elderly people.
- Instruct family member in caring for an elderly
- Advice them not to institutionalize elderly as much as possible.
- Find out the existing and potential need of elderly.
- Create condition that promote quality of life and enable elder people to work and live independently in their own family.
- Provide information regarding senior Citizen society center, Nursing homes, governmental social center, Pashupati Bridashram etc.
- India, Sent Marry Home etc.

Role of the Community

- Establish senior citizen centers in the community and advocate it. Form centers to provide information regarding available resources
- Lobby to policymaker to strengthen laws and policy regarding formation of Ministry of senior citizen in investigating, managing, and preventing the elder abuse.

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