

ELDER ABUSE IN FORMAL CARE SETTINGS IN ITALY

Licia Boccaletti

Salvatore Milianta

Anziani e non solo soc. coop.



ELDER ABUSE – STATE OF ART IN ITALY

- So far no national study on prevalence of elder abuse has ever been carried out in Italy.
- From the legal point of view, Italian legislation does not consider older people as a subject *per se* deserving specific norms to safeguard their rights, unless they find themselves in a peculiar status of need which is itself protected by the law, such as for instance in case of disability or mental incapacity etc.
- In 2013 a law proposal was adopted by the Council of Minister, to raise of 1/3 the punishments in case crimes are perpetrated against persons hosted in residential care facilities.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

- Silvernet Study on recipients of home care services (2007 on 4.600 respondents 65+): The objectives of this study were to evaluate the prevalence of potential elder abuse among older adults receiving home care and to assess the association between behavioral symptoms and potential abuse. Signs of potential abuse were identified in 336 of 3,869 (9%) participants without behavioral symptoms and 126 of 761 (17%) with behavioral symptoms.

POLICE FORCES AGAINST ELDER ABUSE IN RESIDENTIAL CARE

- In 2013 the Ministry of Health has created a joint task force with the Police Corp responsible for crimes against public health safety (NAS) in order to strengthen the inspections in residential care facilities
- In 12 months, over 1000 inspections were carried out – as a result 174 penal crimes have been identified
- This has also contributed to raise the attention of media that now frequently report these kind of crimes.

PREVENTION OF ELDER ABUSE IN RESIDENTIAL CARE SETTINGS

- Quality standards set at Regional level for residential care facilities as well as for home care providers contracted by local public authorities
- Regulation concerning physical/chemical restraint
- Qualification of staff (although no compulsory training on elder abuse is required and it is not part of standard vocational curricula)

ELDER ABUSE IN HEALTH CARE SERVICES

- Health-discrimination / ageism
- Ex. According to the Italian Society of Geriatric Cardiology: 50% of over 65 do not receive appropriate care for cardio-vascular diseases
- Agenzia Italiana del Farmaco (Italian Agency for Drugs) has promoted a working group that aims to include older persons in medical and pharmaceutical research samples
- Diagnosis-related groups used in hospital settings do not allow to highlight abuse