Mistreatment of older persons in Europe and in Italy

Results from the ABUEL study

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CAREGIVER DAY 2015
Prevenire l’Abuso verso gli Anziani
Carpi (MO) - 26 Maggio 2015
MISTREATMENT OF OLDER PERSONS

Complex phenomenon

From 3% to 27% of older persons (according to the survey methodology)

Consequences

- Physical and mental health problems
- Lower life quality
- Pain, suffering, wounds
MISTREATMENT OF OLDER PERSONS

**CATHERGORIES:**
- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- neglect
- human rights violation

**SETTING:**
- Home → more difficult to investigate
- Residential care → NAS inspections
- public

**FREQUENCY:** occasional or repeated act
THE EUROPEAN PROJECT ABUEL

2008-2010
THE EUROPEAN PROJECT ABUEL

- 60-84 years old
- NO cognitive impairment
- Living at home

AIM = identify

Risk factors

Consequences

Objective difficulties in data collection

taboo

BARRIERS

Of abuse
THE EUROPEAN PROJECT ABUEL

4500 participants

628 participants, 270 men and 358 women
PREVALENCE OF EPISODES OF ABUSE

7 COUNTRIES

- Italy: 13.4
- Spain: 14.3
- Greece: 16.0
- Lithuania: 26.0
- Portugal: 27.7
- Germany: 29.0
- Sweden: 30.1
PREVALENCE OF ABUSE CATEGORIES IN EUROPE

At least one kind: 22.6
Psychological: 19.4
Financial: 3.8
Physical: 2.7
Neglect: 1.6
Sexual: 0.7
Physical injuries: 0.7
RESULTS IN MARCHE REGION:
THE CONTEXT OF ANCONA
SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC ASPECTS
% abuse victims (n=628)

86.6%

13.4%

Victims
Not-victims
% abuse victims according to gender (n=84)

- Male: 60.7%
- Female: 39.3%
% abuse victims according to age classes
(n= total for category)

- 60-64: 10.6%
- 65-69: 8.5%
- 70-74: 29.5%
- 75-79: 3.1%
- 80-84: 15.5%
% victims of abuse according to educational levels (n = total for category)

- Unfinished elementary school: 22.2%
- Elementary school: 12.4%
- Secondary school: 13.3%
- University / post univ.: 13.2%
% victims of abuse according to civil status

- Not married: 8.3%
- Married - cohabitating: 14.4%
- Divorced: 23.1%
- Widowed: 7.2%
% victims of abuse according to co-habitation

- Alone: 7.3%
- Alone with spouse/partner: 14.0%
- With spouse/partner/others: 15.3%
- Without spouse/partner/others: 13.2%
Victims of abuse according to professional category

- Armed forces
- Housewives/husbands: 11.7%
- Workmen / artisans: 22.7%
- Specialised prof. in agriculture: 12.8%
- Technician, employees, qualified professionals: 12.2%
- Managers and professionals: 13.7%
% victims of abuse according to income source

- Job: 11.1%
- Pension: 13.3%
- Social security allowances: 26.7%
- From spouse/partner: 12.7%
HEALTH AND LIFE STYLES
Victims/ not victims according to diseases (average)

- Victims: 14.4
- Not-victims: 11.9
Victims / not victims of abuse according to life quality (average)
Probability of anxiety and depression for victims and not-victims
CARACTERISTICS OF OLDER PERSON AT RISK

Individuals exposed to abuse are those belonging to more disadvantaged groups, with health problems and potentially victims of social exclusion.
CARACTERISTICS OF MISTREATMENT
Prevalence of types of abuse and neglect (% on all respondents: M=270; F=358; MF=628)

- Psychological: 16.7% (M=7.0%, F=3.7%) - Males: 16.7%, Females: 3.7%
- Financial: 3.7% (M=2.0%, F=2.0%) - Males: 2.0%, Females: 2.0%
- Physical: 0.7% (M=0.7%, F=1.1%) - Males: 0.7%, Females: 1.1%
- Sexual: 0.4% (M=0.4%, F=0.6%) - Males: 0.4%, Females: 0.6%
- Neglect: 1.4% (M=1.4%) - Males: 1.4%

The chart shows the prevalence of different types of abuse and neglect among males and females, with psychological abuse being the most prevalent overall.
% main episodes/events of psychological abuse
(one or more episodes for every kind of abuse- n=167)

- Exclusion: 11.4%
- Prank: 12.6%
- Diminishing what he/she: 13.8%
- Insult: 21.0%
- Shout at him/her: 23.4%

% main episodes/events of financial abuse
(one or more episodes for every kind of abuse- n=22)

- Tried to get the older person to give him/her goods or money: 9.1%
- Deception to steal good/money: 22.7%
- Steal of goods/money: 45.5%
% perpetrators of psychological abuse (n=89)

- Spouse/partner: 20.3%
- Children / nephews: 13.4%
- Friends and neigh.: 28.2%
- Other relatives: 14.5%
- Others: 23.6%

% perpetrators of financial abuse (n=17)

- Spouse / partner: 17.6%
- Children / nephews: 5.9%
- Friends and neigh.: 76.5%
- Other relatives: 5.9%
- Others: 5.9%
% perpetrators of psychological abuse (n=85)

Female perpetrators: 36.5%
Male perpetrators: 63.5%

% perpetrators of financial abuse (n=17)

Female perpetrators: 5.9%
Male perpetrators: 94.1%
% settings of psychological abuse (n=91)

- Home of victims: 37.4%
- Home of someone else: 14.3%
- Public places: 27.5%
- Other places: 20.9%

% settings of financial abuse (n=17)

- Home of victims: 41.2%
- Home of someone else: 35.3%
- Public places: 23.5%
VICTIM REACTIONS
% reactions for psychological abuse (n=117) and financial (n=26) (one or more reactions)

- No reaction: 3.8% (financial), 6.0% (psychological)
- Faces the perpetrator: 11.5% (financial), 37.6% (psychological)
- Goes away / ignore: 7.7% (financial), 13.7% (psychological)
- Reported event: 6.0% (financial), 38.5% (psychological)
- Emotional: 38.5% (financial), 35.9% (psychological)
n. Reports of psychological abuse (n=7) and financial (n=10)
The reporting of the mistreatment episode it’s not a frequent reaction

Reasons

- Emotional/sentimental
- Dependency (ex. Economical, for daily activities)

Bond between victims and perpetrators of abuse

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Low awareness
SOME CONSIDERATIONS...
Today in Italy

- NO specific forms of support dedicated to the protections of the older person at risk of abuse

- Rare psychological or legal support services, some helplines insufficient

- No specific legal measures, except some articles of the Penal Code, that more generally concern the context of violence against disadvantaged groups (ex. art. 572 on household mistreatments)
Crucial role:
- G.P. at community level
- Geriatrician in hospital setting
- Home-care professionals

Fundamental:
- Information and training of care professionals
- Building of an operational multiprofessional network to activate preventive measures
Actions to undertake

- Increase knowledge and awareness
- Foster the capacity and possibility of a adequately supported reporting
- Promote a stronger intergenerational solidarity
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!