

# Domestic care workers and elder abuse

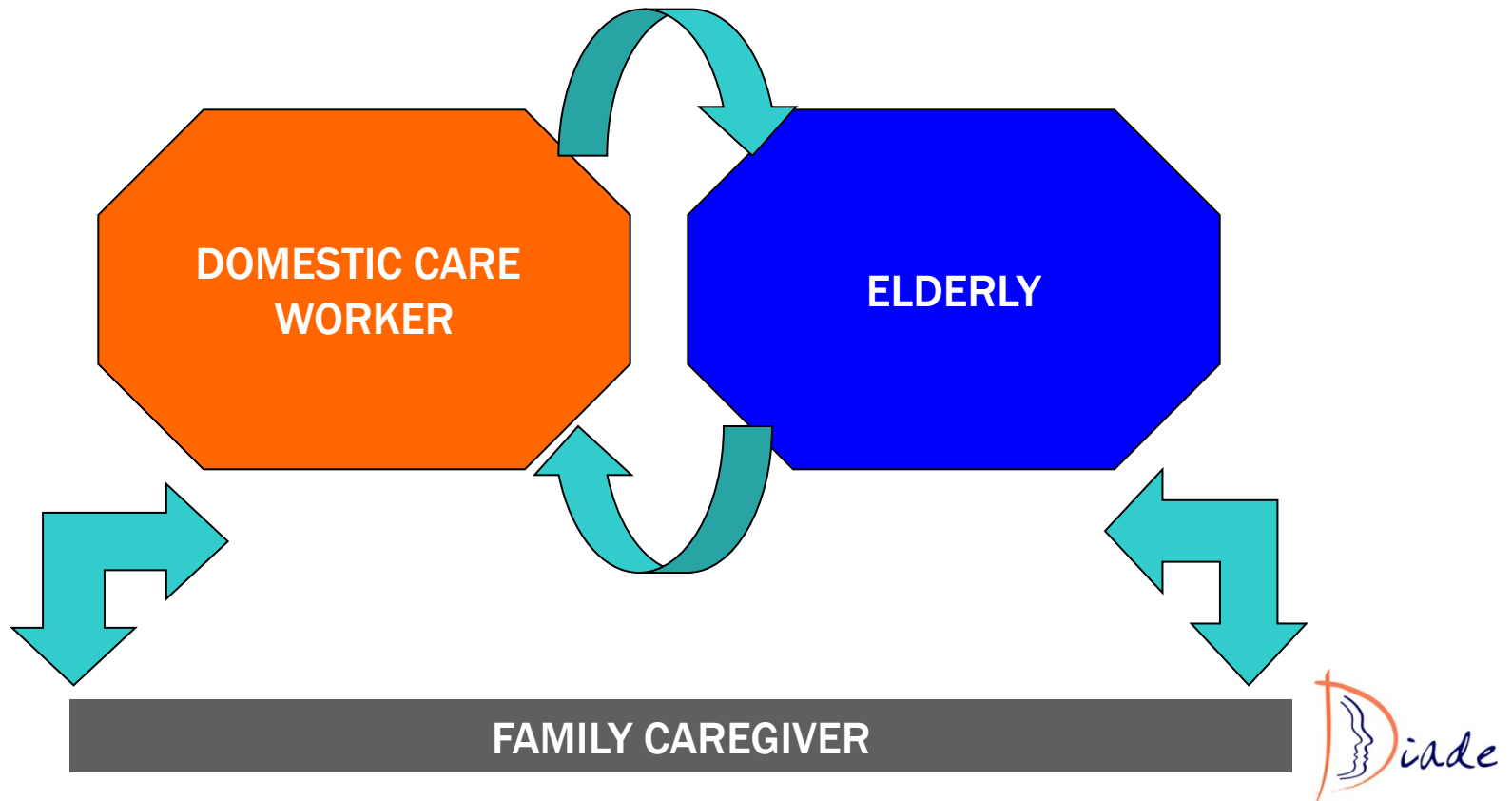
The results of the Diade project

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# DIADE PROJECT:

Analysis and proposal to prevent and deal with  
**physical, sexual, psychological, financial, gender  
based abuse/violence**  
acted and suffered from:



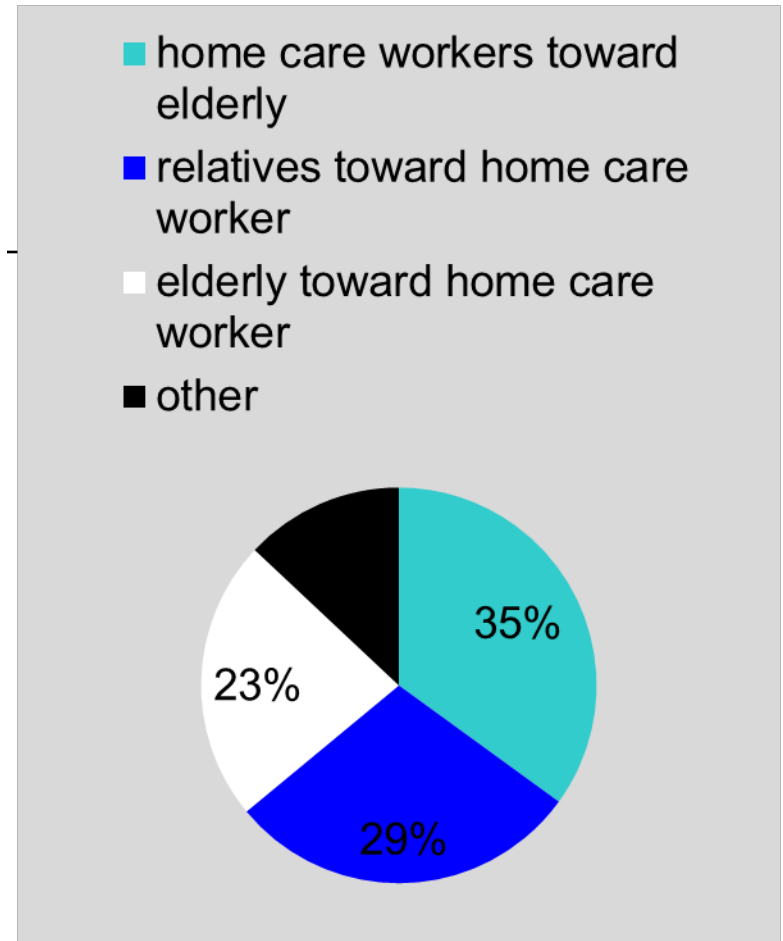
# METHODOLOGIES:

- Action research
- In-depth interviews
- Active participation techniques
- Group work



# FROM THE INTERVIEWS OF LOCAL PARTICIPANTS:

- **219 reports** related to forms of abuse
- Mostly **female victims** (over 89%)
- **35%** of reports concerning abuses acted by **domestic care workers towards elderly**
- **29%** concerning abuses acted by **informal carer towards domestic care worker**
- **23%** concerning abuses acted by **older person towards domestic care workers**



# FROM THE REPORTS... MAIN TYPES OF ABUSE

- **Physical abuse:** acts of violence or rude treatment that causes pain, injury or physical discomfort (**33%** of reports)
- **Violation of human rights:** acts that deny basic human rights (**23%**)
- **Psychological/emotional abuse:** acts and behavior that undermine the freedom and the dignity of the person (**22%**)



# FROM INTERVIEWS OF HOME CARE WORKERS:

- The burden of illegal immigration and the illegal hiring
- The burden of the forced cohabitation
- The constant search for monetization (also the right to rest)
- Social isolation
- Lack of professional knowledge
- The strong perception of unsustainability of person's rights deprivation



## FROM INTERVIEWS OF INFORMAL CARERS:

**Families toward domestic care workers complain especially about**

- a) **Forms of economic abuse** (skim money on shopping, wasteful expenditure, misappropriation, ...)
- b) **Forms of psychological abuse** (also as manipulation) towards the elderly
- c) **Carelessness** (going out without informing the family leaving the elderly alone)

**TIREDNESS TO  
«CARE FOR THE CARE WORKER»**

**The issues of conciliation and the burden of care are the "background" to many statements of families**

# FROM INTERVIEWS OF LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS...

- 69% of the interviews indicate **abuse of alcohol problems** among domestic care workers and relevant use of psychotropic drugs
- 78% reported problems related to diseases of the elderly (**dementia** in large prevalence) as elements that characterize the risk factors
- 43% of the interviews indicate the **absence of the family network**
- Many interviews indicate the **stress** of working conditions as a factor that affects the caring
- 25% of the interviews indicate elements relating to forms of **illegal organization** of carers employment.



# ELDER ABUSE

## THE MAIN RISK FACTORS

- Forced cohabitation
- Absence of the family network
- Social isolation
- Cognitive diseases
- Non-acceptance of own condition
- Anger and frustration with respect to the relationship with children
- Authoritarian character



# ABUSE TOWARD DOMESTIC CARE WORKERS: MAIN RISK FACTORS

- Un-documented work / staying in Italy
- Cohoabitation
- Social isolation
- Frequent lack of rest
- Abuse of psychotropic drugs and alcohol
- Patient with cognitive diseases
- Absence of patient family network



- Lack of linguistic and professional knowledge
- No clarity on the role and on the expectations of the employer



# MAIN CAUSES OF ACTED AND SUFFERED ABUSES

- **Cultural differences** between caregiver and assisted person and the impact of this on the daily management of the care (different perception of the body, emotional relationship, food etc. ...)
- **Poor skills** of domestic care workers in caring people with cognitive diseases
- **The critical aspects of caring work**, often in forced cohabitation without tutoring and supervision, without adequate breaks and aids, ...
- The increasing **difficulties in the context of family network** (nuclear families far from the elderly, unprepared to face a long-term burden of care, not prepared to understand and address issues of cognitive disorders, to play the role of employer often with a sense of guilt unloaded on home care worker and with a growing anxiety over their future)
- **The weaknesses and limitations in the articulation of services** in terms of difficulty to respond quickly to emergencies, in taking charge the family and of the overall shortage of resources in support of home care



anziani fragili e assistenti familiari

**PREVENTION OF ABUSE AND VIOLENCE**

**OVERCOME THE ISOLATION AND  
PROMOTING MUTUAL ACCEPTANCE**

**MAKE RESPECT THE DIGNITY AND THE  
RIGHTS**

**QUALIFY THE WORK OF CARE AND THE  
ASSISTANCE**

# IMPLEMENTED ACTIONS

- Support for the regularization of domestic care workers
- Validation of acquired skills
- Language training for care workers
- Vocational training courses for domestic care workers and family caregivers
- Activation of help desks for family assistance (information, guidance, labor demand/supply matching)