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Abuse against older persons

Joaquim J F Soares

Mid Sweden University, Sweden

Older age is often connected with stresses (e.g. reduced financial capacity, aloneness, increased morbidity). Violence may be an additional strain increasing the overall burden of older persons. Recent data with different samples (e.g. general population) concerning abuse towards older persons show prevalence rates up to 55%. Elder abuse co-exists for instance with depression, premature mortality and injury. Interestingly, little attention has been paid to sex differences in elder abuse. To the extent that such data exist, the findings are inconsistent, i.e. no differences between the sexes, women more abused than men and the opposite. Based on a randomly selected sample of 4,467 women and men aged 60-84 years from 7 European countries (Germany; Greece; Italy; Lithuania; Portugal; Spain; Sweden) and with well-known instruments (e.g. CTS2), we found the following. There were no differences between women and men concerning the prevalence of abuse (e.g. psychological), and its chronicity (how often) and severity (e.g. minor). However, when abuse acts were divided into low and high frequency, women tended to have been exposed to higher levels of abuse (e.g. psychological) than men. Furthermore, although abused women and men were doing worse (e.g. poor quality of life) than non-abused, women's problems were more evident. Practitioners should consider these issues and develop effective prevention and treatment interventions to alleviate the situation of older persons.

Biography

Joaquim J F Soares has a PhD in clinical psychology (Uppsala University). He is Professor in psychology and public health sciences (Mid Sweden University). He is a Tutor of 12 PhD students in the areas of psychology and public health. He is the Reviewer of journals such as *Quality of Life Research and Psychosomatic Medicine*. He has over 80 publications in peer-reviewed journals in the areas of psychology, public health and epidemiology. He was awarded several research grants, including grants from the European Union.

Joaquim.Soares@miun.se

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