ELDER ABUSE: the Good, the Bad and the Ugly (.....and some hope)

Washington Area Villages Exchange

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ELDER ABUSE

• THE GOOD: what we think we know

• THE BAD: what we know we don’t know

• THE UGLY: who is in charge at various levels

• AND SOME HOPE: what’s happening around the U.S. today
What is Elder Abuse

“Intentional actions that cause harm or create a serious risk of harm (whether or not harm is intended) to a vulnerable elder by a caregiver or other person who stands in a trust relationship to the elder”

or

“Failure by a caregiver to satisfy the elder’s basic needs or to protect the elder from harm”

Types of Elder Abuse

• PHYSICAL ABUSE
• PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE  (Verbal)
• FINANCIAL ABUSE  (Exploitation; Fraud; Scam)
• SEXUAL ABUSE
• NEGLECT/ABANDONMENT

• (SELF-NEGLECT)???
PHYSICAL ABUSE

An act, rough treatment or punishment that may result in pain, injury, impairment or death

• Pushing, shoving, hitting
• Kicking, biting, slapping
• Burning, shaking, pinching
• Punching, physical or chemical restraint
• Locking up an elder
• Not allowing toilet use
• Over or under medicating
• Using weapons
PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Verbal or nonverbal behavior that inflicts anguish, mental pain, fear or distress

- Belittling, blaming or bullying
- Intimidation and threats (verbal and non-verbal)
- Ridiculing or humiliating
- The “silent treatment”
- Treating/talking to elder as though s/he were a young child
- Isolating
- Stalking
FINANCIAL ABUSE, EXPLOITATION & SCAMS

Illegal or improper use of an older person’s money or property

• Taking or selling things without permission
• Forcing signatures on documents the elder does not understand
• Using ATM cards without permission
• Forcing the forfeiture of goods
• Impersonation to obtain goods or money
• Using a power of attorney to benefit oneself
• Hiding information about the elder’s money
FINANCIAL ABUSE, EXPLOITATION & SCAMS, CON’T.

- Lottery or sweepstakes fraud
- Pretend romantic attention toward an older adult (sweetheart scam)
- Overcharging for goods or services
- “Get rich quick” investment schemes
- Scam of the Month
  - Posing as government employee requiring a fee (current IRS scheme)
  - Time Share scam

.............and the list goes on – limited only by human ingenuity!!!
SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual contact of any kind, even without physical touching, without agreement from the older person

• Any nonconsensual sexual contact
• Forcing someone to watch pornography or exhibitionism
• Forcing someone to undress
• Photographing someone who is partly or fully undressed
• Unwanted touching or fondling
• Using sexual language
NEGLECT & ABANDONMENT

Intentional or unintentional failure or refusal to provide care or help by someone who is expected to provide care

- Failure to provide
  - Food
  - Shelter
  - Clothing
  - Healthcare
  - Hygiene & safety
  - Money management when needed

- Abandonment: an extreme form of neglect
### PREVALENCE: Elder Mistreatment by Type/100 Seniors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Laumann (n = 3005)</th>
<th>Acierno (n = 5777)</th>
<th>Biggs (n = 2111)</th>
<th>Lachs (NY) (n = 4156)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>4.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One year, overall incidence</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>7.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### DRAMATIC UNDER-REPORTING: the iceberg effect

Rates of EA in New York State: self-report vs. documented cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of Abuse</th>
<th>Document Rate per 1,000</th>
<th>Self-reported Rate per 1,000</th>
<th>Ratio of Self-Reported to Documented (1 in ....)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All forms of abuse</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>43.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical and Sexual</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>57.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional / Psychological</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**RISK FACTORS:** it takes two to tangle

**Abused**
- Cognitive impairment/dementia
- Poor physical health
- Poor mental health
- Care recipient
- Living in the community (vs. nursing home) (~80%)
**RISK FACTORS:**  *it takes two to tangle*

**Abused** (con’t.)

- Women NOT more likely to be abused
- Social isolation; few contacts
- Low socioeconomic status
- Financial dependence
- African Americans (especially financial exploitation for A.A. men)
RISK FACTORS

Abuser

• Family member (~90%) – adult children, spouses, “partners” or paid caregivers
• Substance abuse problem
• Mental health problem
• Perceived caregiver burden
• Dependence upon care recipient
RISK FACTORS: Financial Exploitation

• **Demographic:**
  - single
  - low income
  - African American
  - owning a home
  - large number of household members

• **Psychological:**
  - depression
  - self-neglect
  - lower cognitive capacity
  - low self-control
RISK FACTORS: Financial Exploitation (con’t.)

• **Social:**
  - social support
  - large social network
  - non-use of social services
  - IADL problem
  - financial mismanagement problem
  - physical disability

• **Protective factors:**
  - having partner
  - Latino
  - better health
  - having routine activities
### RISK FACTORS: Financial Abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investment Fraud Victims</th>
<th>Lottery Victims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-65</td>
<td>&gt;75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;$75,000 income</td>
<td>&gt;$30,000 income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financially literate</td>
<td>Low financial literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial risk taker</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested in sales pitch</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Greedy”</td>
<td>Experienced a negative life event</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SIGNS & SYMPTOMS: Physical Abuse

- An elder's report of being hit, slapped, kicked, or mistreated
- An elder's sudden change in behavior
- The caregiver's refusal to allow visitors to see an elder alone
- Bruises, bone fractures, black eyes, welts, lacerations, or rope marks
- Open wounds, cuts, punctures, untreated injuries in various stages of healing
- Sprains, dislocations, or internal injuries/bleeding
- Broken eyeglasses/frames, physical signs of being subjected to punishment, or signs of being restrained
- Laboratory findings of medication overdose or under-utilization of prescribed drugs
SIGNS & SYMPTOMS: Psychological Abuse

• An elder's report of being verbally or emotionally mistreated
• Being emotionally upset or agitated
• Being extremely withdrawn, non-communicative or non-responsive
• Unusual behavior, such as sucking, biting, rocking
• Witnessing a caregiver controlling a senior or isolating a senior
• Exhibiting a change in sleeping patterns or eating habits
• Personality changes such as apologizing excessively, or depression or anxiety
SIGNS & SYMPTOMS: Financial Abuse

• An elder's report of financial exploitation.
• Sudden changes in bank accounts or banking practices (e.g., unexplained withdrawal of large sums of money by a person accompanying the elder)
• Additional names on an elder's bank signature card
• Changes in ATM withdrawal of the elder's funds
• Abrupt changes in a will or other financial documents
• Unexplained disappearance of funds or valuable possessions
Financial Abuse, con’t.

• Substandard care or unpaid bills despite the availability of adequate financial resources
• Elder's signature being forged for financial transactions or for the titles to possessions
• Sudden appearance of previously uninvolved relatives claiming rights to an elder's property or possessions
• Unexplained sudden transfer of assets to a family member or someone outside the family (‘“sweetheart scam”’)
• The provision of unnecessary services
SIGNS & SYMPTOMS: Sexual Abuse

• An elder's report of being sexually assaulted or raped
• Bruises around the breasts or genital area
• Unexplained venereal disease or genital infections
• Unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding
• Changes in a seniors demeanor (e.g., fear or withdrawing around a specific person)
• Evidence of pornographic material being shown to a senior with diminished capacity
• Blood found on sheets, linens or a senior’s clothing
SIGN & SYMPTOMS: Neglect/Abandonment

- An elder's report of being neglected
- An elder's report of being abandoned
- Dehydration, malnutrition, untreated bed sores, poor personal hygiene
- Unattended or untreated health problems
- Hazardous or unsafe living condition/arrangements (e.g., improper wiring, no heat, no running water)
- Unsanitary and unclean living conditions (e.g. dirt, vermin, soiled bedding, fecal/urine smell, inadequate clothing)
- The desertion of an elder at a hospital, a nursing facility, or other similar institution
- The desertion of an elder at a shopping center or other public location
IMPACT OF ELDER ABUSE

• 300% higher (adjusted) risk of death vs. non-abused elderly (Schofield et al., 2013, J Am Geriatric Soc; Dong et al., 2009, JAMA)

• More profound psych distress and lower self-efficacy (Comijs et al., 1999, J Gerontology)

• Poor general health (Bitondo et al., 2000, J Am Geriatric Soc)

• Higher medical costs; approx. $6B/yr (Mouton et al., 2004, Am J Public Health)
• Loss due to financial exploitation ~$3--$34B/yr (NCPEA, 2011, MetLife; TrueLink, 2015)

• Greater nursing home (Lachs et al., 2002, Gerontologist) and hospitalization risk (Dong et al., 2013, JAMA)

• Increased depression and anxiety (Dong, et al., 2013, Gerontology; Mouton et al., 2010, Ann Family Medicine; Gibbs and Mosqueda, 2010, Aging Health)
THE BAD: what we know we don’t know


• Psychometrically sound and consistent measurement
• Prevention
• Interventions
• Risk factors by specific type of EA
THE BAD: what we know we don’t know

• What does “success” look like
• Does Adult Protective Services have a positive impact?
• Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) one size Risk Factor fits all
• No advocacy group
• Lack national awareness campaign
## THE UGLY: who is in charge

### APS Phone Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centralized Phone System</td>
<td>50% (DC)</td>
<td>50% (MD; VA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toll free number</td>
<td>82% (MD; VA)</td>
<td>18% (DC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If toll free number, is it combined with another program intake (CPS)</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept 24/7 reports</td>
<td>70% (DC; MD; VA)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE UGLY: who is in charge

- APS training
- Law enforcement training
- Role of Ombudsman
- Minimal federal responsibility
- Variable reporting across states
- Federal funding for research
# One Year Cancer and Elder Mistreatment Incidence and Federal Investment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cancer</th>
<th>Elder Mistreatment[^3]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All Ages[^1]</td>
<td>&gt; 64[^2]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated New Cases</td>
<td>1,638,910</td>
<td>848,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent population with “event”</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases per 100,000 population at risk</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>2120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIH investment in NCI (2012)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>$5.1 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIH investment in NIA (2012)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIA investment in Elder Mistreatment (2009)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Federal Funding Agencies (not just research; 2009 [GAO, 2011])</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^1]: Based on 2012 ACS data and US population = 313 M
[^2]: Based on SEER incidence rate 2005-2009
[^3]: Based on “weighted average” of Acierno (national) and Lachs (NY state) incidence data and population > 64 = 40 M
and some hope: what’s happening today

• U.S. Department of Justice (DoJ) Elder Justice Initiative
  [www.justice.gov/elderjustice](http://www.justice.gov/elderjustice)
• DoJ/NIJ grants on interventions
• ACL/AoA: NAMRS & NCEA
• Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs)
• Safe Houses
• Publication record
What’s happening today

• ACA/Elder Justice Act
• EJCC
• EJWG
• Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB)
• HIPAA & IRBs
• Neuropsychology
BE SURE TO VISIT

www.justice.gov/elderjustice

Thank you