

Older Women and Implications of Aging in Canada - A South Asian Perspective

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AGING WITHOUT VIOLENCE
STRENGTHENING GENDER-BASED RESPONSES

FORUM VIEILLIR SANS VIOLENCE
AMÉLIORER L'INTERVENTION SEXOSPÉCIFIQUE



Understanding the Issues in the South Asian

- Higher rate of Heart disease
- Higher rate of diabetes
- Higher rate of 'addiction and mental health related' illnesses and problems
- Lower rate of access to professional services for addiction and mental health illnesses
- Higher rate of son preference
- Low rate of cancer screening
- Higher rate of 'family violence' and its effect is devastating
 - Elder abuse
 - Wife abuse
 - Family fragmentation

The Question is WHY.....

- What is our lifestyle?
 - Hard work
 - Lack of recognition of 'stress'
 - High cholesterol diet
 - Lack of exercise
 - Lack of 'leisure time'
 - Lack of spending on personal health.....
 - Accumulation of wealth and lack of enjoyment. We sacrifice everything for our children.
 - 'worrying culture' produces illnesses

Why do we do thingsthis way?

- Traditions
- What will the people say?
- Collective responsibility versus individual responsibility
- The mix-up between religion and culture
- Lack of acceptance of civic responsibility
- Assimilation or acculturation - or none

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of pink and purple, creating a modern and artistic feel. The shapes are primarily triangles and polygons, some with soft gradients.

Research On Elder Abuse in the South Asian Community

Some Key Issues for Elder Women in the South Asian community

- More isolated at home
 - (men are able to attend seniors groups)
- Less accessibility to primary care
- Vision, Hearing and Dental - Less of a priority
- Contribute more to homemaking
 - Taking care of grand children
 - Cooking and cleaning
- Less access to finances
- More vulnerable to property abuse
- More at risk for admittance to LTC facility than men

Elder Abuse Research – by PCHS



- March 2004 completed
- It took two years to complete the study
- Five hundred elders completed the questionnaires.
- More than thirty one elders participated in the focus groups.
- More than forty seniors shared their personal stories.

Building Social Capital in the Punjabi Community

Research on Elder Abuse in the Punjabi Community

FINAL REPORT
March 2004

<http://pchs4u.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Final-Report-Elder-Abuse-2004.pdf>



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Scope of the Study

- To determine the level of understanding of elder abuse in the Punjabi Community
- To examine the state of elder abuse in the Punjabi Community
- To determine what intervention modalities would work in the Punjabi Community
- To determine how awareness could be raised in the Punjabi Community

What we learned about ABUSE

- Can happen anywhere
- There are 3 common variables:
 - Unequal balance of power
 - Isolation
 - The abused is quite often dependent on the abuser
- Is usually not a one time occurrence

Types of Abuse

Nine types of abuse were identified by the elders (the elders added two new definitions):

1. Physical
2. Financial
3. Psychological/Emotional
4. Exploitation
5. Neglect
6. Abandonment
7. Psychosocial
8. System
9. Property

Awareness of abuse:

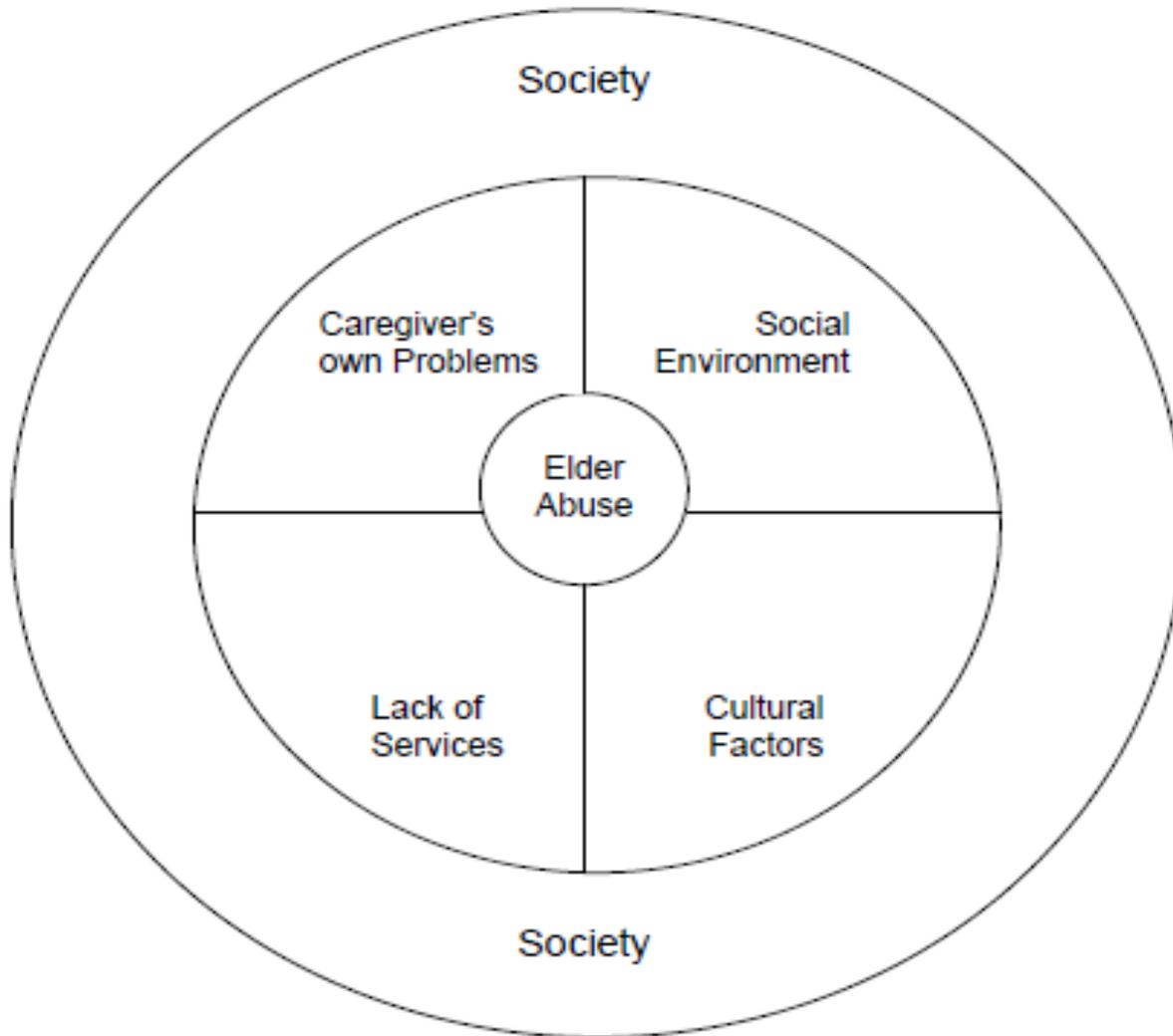
The term “elder abuse” was not clear to the elder.

PCHS Research

- *Findings Based On the Personal Stories and the themes were:*
 - Feelings of worthlessness
 - Feelings of isolation
 - Feelings of loneliness
 - Feelings of helplessness
 - Lack of trust
 - Lack of communication
 - Exploitation
 - Longing for a fruitful relationship (between wife, adult children and grandchildren)
 - Cultural conflict
 - Lack of service centers
 - Longing for spiritual satisfaction
 - Longing for respect
 - Nostalgia (time spent in India)
 - Understanding the youth and the need to communicating with them effectively

Contributing Factors to Elder Abuse

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Contributing Factors to Elder Abuse

Part A: Caregiver's own problems

- The participants felt that their adult children were:
 - Stressed (unable to culturally adjust in Canada)
 - Themselves having “marriage problems” (constant fighting)
 - Themselves having “child-rearing problems” (youth not listening)
 - Having their own “financial problems” (more than one job)
 - Looking after “their own needs” (babysitting needs etc.)
 - Considering elders as a “liability”

Part B: Social Environment

- *The participants also felt that the social environment creates conditions whereby elder abuse is perpetuated against seniors. For example:*
- *Dependency of seniors on their adult children*
 - *For medical appointments*
 - *Going to the Gurdwaras*
 - *Going to other family and non-family functions*
 - *Going to seek medical and other health care services*
- *Isolation and Loneliness (weather conditions, transportation issues, language barriers, poor health)*
- *Immigrant status*

Contributing Factors to Elder Abuse

Part C: Lack of Services

- *The participants felt that social service system:*
 - *Does not adequately address elder abuse*
 - *Is not culturally appropriate*
 - *Cannot be accessed by seniors due to transportation issues and language barriers*

Part D: Cultural Factors

- *The participants also felt that some contributing factors associated with senior abuse maybe related to seniors themselves. For example:*
- *Cultural factors*
 - *Senior's expectations of their children could lead to confrontations. Expectations in the areas of: control of finances, decision making, and distribution of money.*
 - *Senior's unrealistic expectation from the daughter-in-law.*
 - *Wife's parents could be at higher risk of abuse if they are living with their daughter.*
 - *Daughter continues to reside with her parents after marriage. This norm is contrary to Punjabi culture, where after marriage the daughter lives with her in-laws.*

Major Recommendations:

The research team wanted to know from seniors what they would like to do about 'senior abuse'. The seniors identified their needs into four categories and wanted the research team to take following actions:

Recommendations:

1. Raise Awareness on Elder Abuse through various means:
 - TV, Radio and Print Media
 - Arts Medium - poetry, skits and drama's
 - Develop an advocacy group
2. Develop Intergenerational Programming
3. Address the needs of seniors in four areas:
 - Support to Caregiver
 - Social Environment
 - Access to Senior's services
 - Cultural factors leading to senior abuse
4. Develop Resources
 - Videos and DVDs

Programs/Services Provided till Date:

1. Langar on Wheels Program
2. Seniors Abuse Video
3. Respite and Caregiver Program
4. Family Enhancement Program
5. Peer Support Program
6. Educational and Social Group Programming - Peer Led Groups
7. Know Your Numbers Program
8. Kirtan Project in LTC's
9. Baba/Bibi Program
10. Communications Department
11. Seniors Events - Health Mela

Q/A

Thank You