

Promising Practices in Elder Abuse

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Introduction

- Thanks to PHABC for the privilege of being here (and for the invite!)
- Acknowledgement of Canada for it's work/commitment and leadership in this area
- Elder abuse as a comparative infant – new kid on the block!
- Elder abuse/adult safeguarding of individuals who may be at risk
- Elder mistreatment is term encompassing abuse, neglect, exploitation
- Public health approaches and evidence as fundamental in this area

Some remarks about this topic

- Two broad types of intervention are possible in this field:
 - Wholly directed at elder mistreatment (EM)
 - Directed at factors related to elder mistreatment (but not EM itself)
- Evidence is quite limited for several reasons:
 - Due to a lack of intervention studies, including high quality and robust evaluations.
 - Some studies are small-scale and have not been replicated
- Progress is slow, but steady...hence use of promising

Directed at elder mistreatment (EM)

- High quality psychological programmes (perpetrator focused)
 - Couple of good studies where self-reports of abusive behaviour(s) decreased over time. But ? replication
- Promising findings re: multi-disciplinary team (MDT) use
- Mixed findings from studies on:
 - Professional awareness and education/training on EM
 - Legal/psychological and educational support for victim/survivors
 - Restraint reduction programmes in institutional settings
- Possible increased rates of EM following interventions
 - Home visits/APS/volunteer advocacy schemes/restraint reduction
 - BUT: do rates actually increase or is it that there is more knowledge and understanding about EM, leading to more reporting?
 - And differing methods used (research) may confound

Directed at elder mistreatment (EM) - 2

- Need for more research – some specific areas
- No high quality/good studies on:
 - Public information/awareness campaigns
 - Screening
 - Education for older people (as potential victims)
 - APS
 - Helplines
 - Shelters or other institutions (as intervention sites)
- Need for multi-component and ?complex interventions
 - Mixed-methods approaches
 - Realist review and evaluation

Directed at factors related to elder mistreatment

- Positive short-term changes found in:
 - School-based intergenerational projects
 - Developing positive attitudes to ageing (paid carers/professionals)
 - Information and support for caregivers (unpaid/informal carers)
- Emerging findings:
 - Interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral approaches
 - Community-level coalitions e.g. FAST (US teams)
 - Systemic approaches
 - Few studies – more recent developments in intervention
- Need for more research to determine factorial level gains
 - Temporal dimensions
 - Different methodological approaches

Programme level factors

- Need for good quality evidence:
 - Outcomes
 - Long-term follow-up
 - Cost effectiveness (and efficiency)
- Research needs to further explore apparent increases in mistreatment from/with certain interventions
- Need for more research to determine:
 - Costs associated with mistreatment – at individual/relational/community/societal levels
- Implementing public health approaches – especially systemic (and systematic) approaches to primary prevention

Final thoughts

- Canadian work on faith-based and inter-generational approaches is innovative and needs testing out elsewhere
- A need for development of inclusive communities
- A need for prevention across generations (and the 'generational divide') and encompassing a life-course approach
- Implementation of such approaches needs:
 - To occur across individual, meso, macro levels
 - To encompass advances in all areas: strategic, programmatic, and/or action-oriented

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