Preventing and Tackling Elder Abuse and Mistreatment in Europe

Prof. dr. Liesbeth De Donder
1 juni 2018
Overview of the presentation

1. WHY?
2. WHAT?
3. HOW MANY?
4. HOW TACKLE?
1. WHY?
Increase % older adults (<65 years) (2005-2015)
Population by age groups in the EU-28

2014
Children 15.6 %  
Working-age population 65.9 %  
Elderly 18.5 %

2080
Children 15.1 %  
Working-age population 56.2 %  
Elderly 28.7 %
Figure 2: Population structure by broad age groups, EU-28, 2014–80 (% of total population)

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: demo_pjanbroad and proj_13ndbims)
2. WHAT?
Definition

- elder abuse is “a *single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action*, occurring within any *relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person*”.

UK’s Action on Elder Abuse (1995: 11)
International Network for Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA)
WHO (2002a: 3) in their Toronto declaration
Physical
Psychological
Neglect
Violations of personal rights
Sexual
Financial
Unintentional versus intentional

• E.g. unintentional/passive neglect: when for instance malnutrition or decubitus occurs, often through an unintentional failure to provide care.
• E.g. intentional/active neglect: refusal of cleaning, care, medication
• → Abuse versus Maltreatment
Institutional abuse

Undercoverreportage 'Pano' legt pijnpunten in commerciële woonzorgcentra bloot

11-10-17, 19.01u - Redactie - Bron: VRT, Belga
3. HOW MANY?
- 30.1% older women (> 60 years)
- experienced at least one item of elder abuse
- the past year
- AVOW study in
  - Austria
  - Belgium
  - Finland
  - Lithuania
  - Portugal

Luoma et al. 2011 (AVOW study)

High density of elder abuse (multiple item/form)

Low density of elder abuse (single item/form)

Level 1

Low intensity of elder abuse (seldom)

14.6%

7.4%

Level 2

1.5%

Level 3

6.5%

High intensity of elder abuse (often or very often)

Source: after Bennett & Kingston (1993, p. 13f)

Mij zou je toch niet in het zak zetten, hè?

4. HOW TACKLE?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Macro</th>
<th>Exo</th>
<th>Meso</th>
<th>Micro</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Public information campaigns on elder abuse(^a)</td>
<td>Awareness and education among professional carers(^d)</td>
<td>Social network strengthening(^a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public anti-ageist campaigns(^a)</td>
<td>Anti-ageist campaigns: intergenerational programmes(^b)</td>
<td>Informal caregiver support programme(^a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enhancement of care services(^b)</td>
<td>Restraint reduction programmes(^b)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Screening and detection(^a)</td>
<td>Mandatory reporting(^a)</td>
<td>Helplines(^a)</td>
<td>Awareness and education among (potential) victims(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td></td>
<td>Peer social support and self-help groups(^a)</td>
<td>Home visits by police officer or volunteers(^c)</td>
<td>Safe houses and emergency shelters(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adult protective services(^c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quaternary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Psychological programmes for perpetrators(^d)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Lacks any scientific, high-quality evaluation.  
\(^b\) Has impact on the targeted risk factors.  
\(^c\) Has negative or adverse effects on elder abuse.  
\(^d\) Shows promising effects on elder abuse.


Need for detection by professionals

- 55% (female) victims never talked about the abuse, nor reported it to an official agency.
- A lot of reporting to elder abuse helplines = done by (social and health) care professionals
- Need for early and pro-active detection
  - But professionals express difficulties/barriers in detecting/reporting
  - IOA: Indicators Of Abuse screen (Reis & Nahmiash, 1998)
    - Eventueel + BASE: Brief Abuse Screen for the Elderly
  - E-IOA: Extended Indicators Of Abuse screen (Cohen et al., 2006)
  - EAI: Elder Assessment Instrument (Fulmer, 2004)
  - EASI: Elder Abuse Suspicion Index (Yaffe et al., 2008)
  - REAMI: Risk on Elder Abuse and Mistreatment – Instrument (De Donder et al., 2018)
Need for more attention to macro-variables

• (as ‘permissors’ of abuse and mistreatment)
  – E.g. Underlying ageism (e.g. societal attitudes to the transfer of assets and government policies encouraging this) (Wilson et al., 2009)

Table 5. Spearman correlation coefficients for macro level variables and severity of abuse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Severity of abuse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita</td>
<td>−.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk of poverty</td>
<td>.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social protection expenditures</td>
<td>−.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower education older age</td>
<td>.129*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Age Dependency Ratio</td>
<td>.126*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender inequality</td>
<td>.084*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population density</td>
<td>.104*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. p < .05.

European Charter of the rights and responsibilities of older people in need of long-term care and assistance
European Quality Framework for long-term care services

Principles and guidelines for the wellbeing and dignity of older people in need of care and assistance
Final thoughts

1. Categorical or inclusive? Need for specific expertise and actions

2. Solutions for domestic violence not always/often appropriate for older people

3. Who is the perpetrator? Abuse in institutions
   - Institutional abuse

4. Need for more knowledge on (different types of) elder abuse
Thank you
liesbeth.de.donder@vub.be