Elder Abuse

What every nurse needs to know
What is elder abuse?

Maltreatment of people greater than 60 years old. The most common forms of abuse are:

• Neglect
• Financial
• Abandonment
• Physical
• Sexual
• Emotional

(Center for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2010)
Neglect

Refusal or failure to fulfill obligations to an elder and may include not providing for:

• Food
• Water
• Medicine
• Shelter
• Safety
• Personal hygiene

(Administration on Aging [AOA], 2011)
Signs of Neglect

May include

- Dehydration
- Malnutrition
- Untreated pressure ulcers
- Unsafe living conditions
- Untreated health problems
- Unsanitary living situation

(AOA, 2011)
Financial Abuse

Illegal or unauthorized use of an elder's money, property or assets. Examples include:

- Forging checks
- Unauthorized check cashing
- Stealing money or assets
- Coercing and or deceiving an elder into signing legal documents

(AOA, 2011)
Abandonment

When someone who has assumed responsibility for an elder, or who has custody of an elder, dissociates the elder.

(AOA, 2011)
Signs of Abandonment

• An elders statement of being abandoned
• Leaving an elder at a public place
• Disserting an elder at the hospital

(AOA, 2011)
Physical Abuse

The use of force that results in any physical pain, impairment, or bodily injury. Examples are:

- Striking with or without an object
- Hitting
- Pushing
- Kicking
- Pinching

(AOA, 2011)
Signs of Physical Abuse

• Bruises
• Broken bones
• Lacerations
• Internal bleeding
• Laboratory results consistent with a medication overdose
• Caregivers refusal to allow visitors to the elder

(AOA, 2011)
Signs of Sexual Abuse
Sexual Abuse

Nonconsensual sexual activity with an elder, or when an elder is unable to give consent. Examples include:

• Unwelcome touching
• Forced nudity
• Explicit photography
• Rape
• Sodomy

(AOA, 2011)
Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding
- Bruising around breasts or genitals
- Unexplained venereal disease
- Torn, stained, or bloody underwear
- Elders statement of sexual abuse

(AOA, 2011)
Emotional Abuse

The infliction of distress or pain from verbal or nonverbal acts. Examples:

• Intimidation
• Humiliation
• Verbal assaults
• Insults
• Threats

(AOA, 2011)
Signs of Emotional Abuse

- Withdrawn
- Non-communicative
- Unusual behavior, attributed to dementia
- Elders statement of emotional abuse
- Emotionally upset

(AOA, 2011)
Prevalence

- Estimated at 1-2 million annually
- In domestic situation estimated to be 1 in 14 (excluding self-neglect)
- Estimated that for every 1 case reported, another 5 go unreported
- In 2003, a long term care ombudsmen investigated nearly 21,000 complaints of abuse in nursing homes or board and cares

(National Center on Elder Abuse, 2005)
Risk Factors

- Domestic abuse grown old (spousal abuse)
- Social isolation
- Drug abuse/alcoholism
- Caregiver stress
- Cycle of abuse (learned behavior)
- Difficult personalities/disease processes (i.e. dementia) of the elder

(AOA, Risk factors for elder abuse, 2011)
BRN Requirements

- RN’s must report known, reasonably suspect, or observed instances of abuse to the appropriate authorities.
- Applies to those situations that occur in the RN’s professional capacity or within the scope of employment.

(State of California Department of Consumer Affairs, 2010)
What the law requires

Report of injuries Penal Code 11160:

- Report by telephone **immediately** or as soon as practically possible and a written report shall be prepared on the standard form.

- The completed forms shall be sent to local law enforcement agency within **two** working days of receiving the information regarding the person.

(State of California Department of Consumer Affairs, 2010)
Elder Abuse Reporting

Phone Numbers

Orange County, Ca. (714) 800-451-5155
(24 hours)

San Bernardino County, Ca. (877) 565-2020
(24 hours)

Los Angeles County, Ca. (877) 477-3646
(24 hours)

(California Department of Social Services, 2007)
References


