

Community Attitudes Towards Elder Abuse in WA

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Aim

To explore and benchmark community attitudes to elder abuse among Western Australians.

Specific objectives

- awareness of elder abuse
- understanding of elder abuse
- perceived seriousness of elder abuse
- older people's concern about being abused.

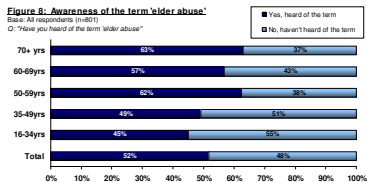
Definition of elder abuse

Any act which causes harm to an older person and occurs within an informal relationship of trust, such as family or friends.

Sample

- 801 people, data weighted by age
 - 33% 16 to 39 years of age
 - 33% 40 to 59 years of age
 - 17% 60 to 69 years of age
 - 17% 70+ years of age
- 50% male, 50% female
- 75% metro, 25% non-metro

Awareness of elder abuse



Spontaneous mentions of elder abuse

- Physical abuse (27%)
- Psychological/emotional abuse (24%)
- Neglect (16%)
- Financial/material abuse (10%)
- Sexual abuse (1%)
- Social abuse (1%)

Spontaneous mentions of perpetrators of elder abuse

- Family (21%)
- Younger people (13%)
- Carers (7%)
- Friends (2%)

- Nursing homes (15%)
- Intruders (8%)
- On the streets (6%)

Who is most at risk of being abused?

- Men and women equally (48%)
- Women (46%)
- Men (6%)

Perceived seriousness of elder abuse

- Majority agreed elder abuse is a serious issue for the community (87%).

Seriousness of various behaviours

- Hits, pushes or slaps an older person (96%)
- Pressures an older person to withdraw money from their bank account against their will (96%)
- Prevents an older person from receiving adequate medical care (95%)
- Deliberately overmedicates an older person to make them easier to handle (95%)
- Calls an older person names and humiliates them (92%)
- Prevents an older person from having contact with other family or friends (90%)

Prevalence of elder abuse

Figure 14: Perceived prevalence of elder abuse in our community
 Total: 86 respondents including don't know and refused (n=4)
 Q: To what extent agree or disagree with "elder abuse is a common issue in our community"

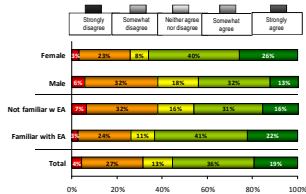
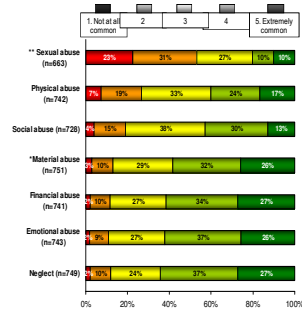


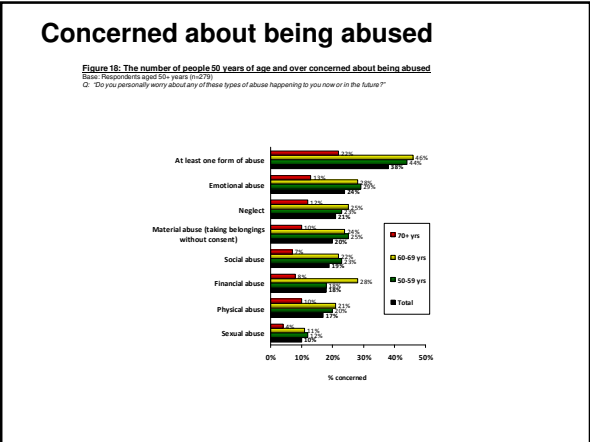
Figure 15: Perceived prevalence by type of elder abuse

Q: "I will now read out several forms of elder abuse. Please tell me the extent to which you believe they are common acts against older people in our community"



Perceived growth of elder abuse in our community

– Majority agreed elder abuse was becoming more prevalent in our community (79%).



Attitudes towards interventions to elder abuse

- Elder abuse is a private matter that should be left to the family to deal with (87% disagree).
- Elder abuse should be reported to the police (96% agree)
- Victims of elder abuse are reluctant to seek outside help (93% agree)
- Would intervene if aware family member or close friend was a victim of elder abuse (92%).

Awareness of support services

- Police (44%)
- Salvation Army (10%)
- Doctor (10%)
- Religious group (8%)
- Silver Chain (6%)