

Research finds America's elderly suffering abuse

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A new study concludes that nearly 13 percent of America's aged citizens suffer some form of abuse. Specifically, nine percent of adults reported they have suffered from verbal mistreatment, 3.5 percent suffer financial mistreatment, and 0.2 percent suffer physical mistreatment. This data was reported in the latest issue of *The Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*.

The research was conducted by a team headed by Edward O. Laumann, PhD, at the University of Chicago. The findings were based on the National Social Life, Health and Aging Project, which conducted interviews with over 3,000 community-dwelling residents aged 57 to 85.

"The population of the country is aging, and people now live with chronic diseases longer. So it's important to understand, from a health perspective, how people are being treated as they age," Laumann said.

Older adults who are physically impaired are particularly susceptible to mistreatment. This demographic is 13 percent more likely to experience verbal abuse than those without similar handicaps — although there was no evidence to suggest they suffer greater financial mistreatment.

The Chicago researchers also found that females were nearly twice as likely to report verbal mistreatment, but no higher level of financial mistreatment, than men; Latinos were about half as likely as whites to report verbal mistreatment and 78 percent less likely to report financial mistreatment; and blacks were 77 percent more likely to report financial

mistreatment than whites.

Most elders reported that the mistreatment was perpetrated by someone other than a member of their immediate family. Of those who reported verbal mistreatment, 26 percent identified their spouse or romantic partner as the person responsible; 15 percent said their child verbally mistreated them; and 57 percent said that the mistreating party was someone other than a spouse, parent, or child.

A total of 56 percent of those who reported financial mistreatment said that someone other than a member of their immediate family was responsible. Of family members, children were mentioned most often and spouses rarely. Ex-spouses, in-laws, and siblings were all identified by some respondents as those responsible for mistreatment.

More information: [The Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences](#) (Volume 63B, Number 4)

Source: The Gerontological Society of America

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