

Elder abuse is common around the world

June 15 2015

A new global review reveals that elder abuse—which includes psychological, physical, and sexual abuse; neglect; and financial exploitation—is common among community-dwelling older adults and is especially prevalent among minority older adults. Older adults with cognitive and physical impairments or psychosocial distress are also at increased risk of elder abuse.

In North and South American epidemiological studies, the prevalence of elder abuse ranged from about 10% among cognitively intact older adults to 47% in older adults with dementia. In Europe, the prevalence varied from 2% in Ireland to 61% in Croatia. In Asia, the highest prevalence was found among older adults in China (36%), while the lowest was reported among [older adults](#) in India (14%). In Africa, the prevalence ranged between 30% and 44%.

The findings suggest that health professionals should consider integrating routine screening of elder abuse in clinical practice, especially among high-risk populations. Specific guidance is provided in the review for healthcare professionals to manage potential elder abuse cases.

"The epidemics of [elder abuse](#) and our societal inability to sufficiently protect the most vulnerable population are only compounded by their increased risks for premature death, psychosocial distress, use of emergency departments, hospitalization, and nursing home placement," said Dr. XinQi Dong, lead author of the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* review. "Systematic, coordinated and targeted research, education, advocacy, and policy efforts are needed to protect, prevent,

and serve our golden population in diverse communities."

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is today-June 15, 2015.

More information: *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* 2015.
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