Social Work and Abuse of Older People

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Overview

- Historical perspectives and emergence as an issue
- Social work interest and involvement
- From margin to mainstream the road to recognition
- What's in a Name?
- Policy decisions Elder abuse or Adult Safeguarding?
- Practice implications
- Human Rights and Older People

Introduction and Background

- Historical aspects
- Global phenomenon
- Recent recognition, increasing concern
- Contextual matters
 - Demography
 - Medical and technological advances
 - Advocacy and rights
- Definitional issues

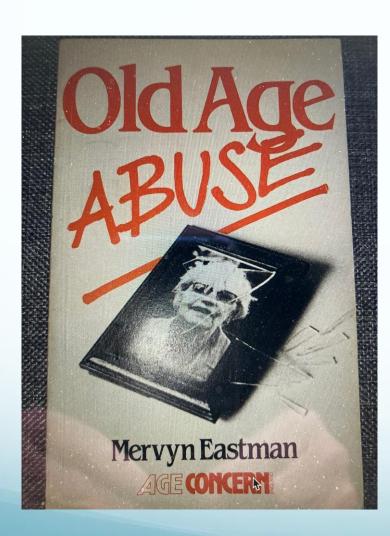
Introduction and Background

- Comparative lack of recognition an under-developed concept
- A taboo topic hidden from public gaze
- Primacy of the individual and personal
- Private issue or public concern
- Adult safeguarding or distinct forms of abuse?
- Risk, vulnerability and protection welfare model
- Importance of professional identification

Historical Perspectives and Emergence as an Issue

- Identified early in the US known in social work (1960s)
- Early medical recognition in UK publications
 - Modern Geriatrics (Baker-1975) and BMJ (Burston 1975)
- Age Concern attention from early 1980s
- Work to raise profile within social work (health professions slower)
- Academic interest established over time

Early Social Work Publications



Br. J. Social Wk. (1993) 23, 95-112

The Abuse of Elderly People: Considerations for Practice

BRIDGET PENHALE

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SUMMARY

Within the last six years, concern about the abuse of elderly people by their informal carers has increased in Britain. However, problems remain in the identification and treatment of both those who are abused and their abusers. The purpose of this paper is to consider some of the barriers to the identification of abuse; to look at the similarities and differences between the abuse of elderly people and other forms of family violence (in particular child abuse) and to discuss the umplications of these for social work practice.

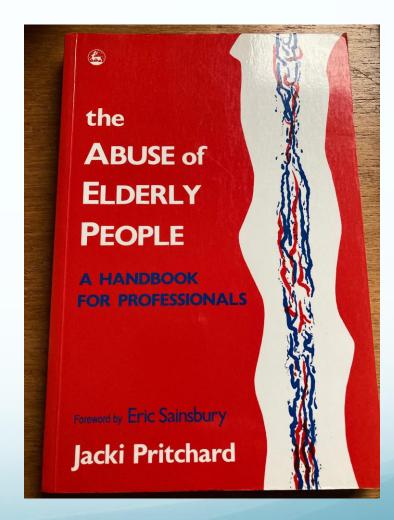
INTRODUCTION

In 1975, Baker and Burston both published material in medical journals in the UK drawing attention to what they termed 'Granny Battering' and 'Granny Bashing'. Shortly after this researchers in the United States also began to report on the abuse of elderly people in domestic settings. A useful review of the American literature from this period can be found in Giordano and Giordano (1984).

Since this initial interest there has been a fairly steady development of the field in the United States. During the 1980s there was a great deal of awareness and action (including legislation) concerning the abuse of elderly people. This followed earlier developments in other areas of family violence particularly concerning child abuse (1960s) and spouse abuse (1970s).

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1984 1993 1994

Policy Decisions

- Work within Social Services Inspectorate
 - No Longer Afraid: the safeguard of older people in domestic settings (1993)
 - It could never happen here!: prevention and treatment of sexual abuse of adults with learning disabilities in residential care (ARC/NAPSAC, 1996); There are no easy answers: the provision of continuing care and treatment to adults with learning disabilities who abuse others (ARC/NAPSAC, 1997)
- Virginia Bottomley on Newsnight (June 1991)...'I don't frankly think that abuse of the elderly is a major issue, thank goodness, in our society'
- Acknowledgement by Tim Yeo about abuse due to carer stress (Sept. 1992); John Bowis wrote foreword to 1993 SSI guidelines
- Early DoH working group convened 1997
- Decision to look at Adult Protection/Protection of Vulnerable Adults
- Lengthy process, slow progress consultation period 1999
- No Secrets: Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse (DH and HO 2000)

Policy Decisions

- Consultation process on Update/revised guidance commenced 2008
- Lengthy process disagreement about issues
- Culmination and inclusion in Care Act, 2014 (Part 1-s.11 and Part 7; chapter 14 Care and support statutory guidance, 2016ff)
- Scotland: Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act, 2007
- Wales: Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act, 2014 Part 7
- Early Regulatory changes from mid 1980s Registered Homes Act, 1984;
 Care Standards Act, 2000; Care Homes Regulations, 2001;; Vulnerable
 Groups Act, 2006 POVA List- Barring functions- CRB-ISA-DBS)

What's in a Name?

- Granny battering Granny bashing
- Old age abuse
- Abuse of older people
- Elder abuse
- Inadequate Care
- Elder mistreatment/ Elder maltreatment
- Abuse of older people Adult Safeguarding Safeguarding Adults at risk

Implications for Practice

- Everybody's Business
- Need for partnership and collaboration
 - Working with individuals
 - Multi-agency working extending range
- Making Safeguarding Personal Care Act focus
- Role of Processes (policies, procedures, structures)
- Focus on when things go wrong
- Developing good practice developing interventions

Current developments

- Importance of framing
 - Social problem
 - Public health problem
 - Human rights issue
- International attention UN WHO and HRC and INPEA (NGO)
- WHO campaign of abuse of older people
- Independent Expert Report on Violence against and abuse and neglect of older persons – (presented to HRC - Sept 2023); priority focus
- Human Rights Council Resolution Violence, abuse and neglect (Oct 2023)
- Towards a UN Convention on Human Rights of Older Persons...

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