

Defining the perpetrator



Jill Manthorpe

@scwru

Social Care Workforce Research Unit

Jill.manthorpe@kcl.ac.uk

Introduction



- A personal first – why have we never been asked to talk about this before?
- Is it the risk of the researcher – saying ‘*it is all very complicated*’, ‘*more research needed*’ ?
- Research related points, if incidence and prevalence of abuse are so under-reported then so too will be numbers of perpetrators
- How to measure numbers and impact of repeat or serial perpetrators?

What's in a name?

- Perpetrator – minimally used in Adult safeguarding in UK – if used “inverted commas” – more common in United States (US)
- Abuser, criminal,
- Can be adult at risk/vulnerable adult



Face of evil? Situational? Personal characteristic?

- Or feel entitled to inheritance?
- Payback for past wrongs?
- Incompetent?
- Overwhelmed, engulfed?
- Opportunistic?
- Adult at risk lacking *mens rea*?
- Dependent or desperate?
- Wrong person in wrong place at wrong time?



Care workers filmed attacks on elderly

Two young women filmed their sickening abuse of old people to entertain their friends. A court was told how the two former care home workers tormented their victims, both suffering from severe dementia, pinching them, pulling and contorting their faces, pushing a mobile phone at one woman's face and putting their fingers in the mouth of another.



Isle of Wight County Press, 26th February 2009

Carer pinned OAP down by his arms

A carer in a nursing home who held a 91-year-old resident down by his arms, wept as she was found guilty of ill-treatment. (she) claimed that she had been acting in self-defence as the man, who suffered from dementia, tried to punch her.

Rhyl Journal, 26th November 2008

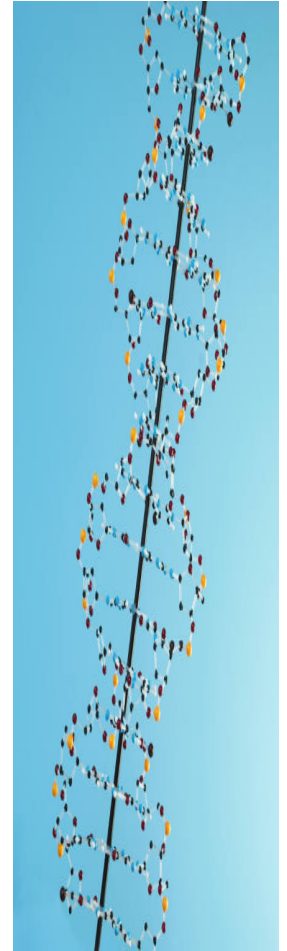
Care home workers terrified dementia patients with horror hand puppets 'for fun'

Two care home nurses are facing jail for using a glove puppet to bully elderly women as a joke. (They) were paid to look after the frail grandmothers - but instead the pair '*scared them for just for the fun of it*'. (They) laughed while using a green goblin puppet to terrify women patients aged 87 and 91 in the home for the elderly.

Daily Mail, 3rd December 2010

Data impressions

- Perpetrators – small groups and certain individuals visible and dominating
- Portrayal in media - sometimes as described in court or professional hearings
- No real engagement in SCRs (unless overlapping victim status)
- Practice perspectives subject to confidentiality but practice ‘talk’



Safeguarding Adults Returns 2014 data

Based on 99,190 allegations (alerts/referrals) recorded for concluded referrals:

The source of risk was most commonly someone known to the alleged victim but not in a social care capacity, accounting for 49% of allegations.

Social care employees were the source of risk in 36% of allegations.

For the remaining 15% the perpetrator was unknown to the alleged victim.



Some voices heard

- In mitigation – court/media
- As statements to disciplinary and professional bodies
- In POVA/ISA accounts
- Often silence



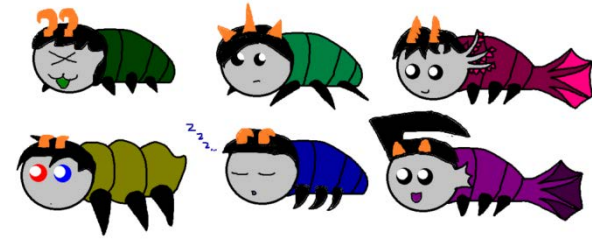
Mitigation (as cited in ISA referrals)

- Personal circumstances
 - Mental wellbeing
 - Economic hardship
 - Personal relationships
- Provocation



Source: Ecorys (2012) Safeguarding in the workplace: What are the lessons to be learned from cases referred to the ISA?

Research says



Not all perpetrators of elder abuse are alike,
vary by type of abuse and by variations in
culpability, by complexity...

Not all typical 'bad guys' (or gals)

Responses – criminalisation or therapeutic?

Jackson, SL (2014) All Elder Abuse Perpetrators Are Not Alike: The Heterogeneity of Elder Abuse Perpetrators and Implications for Intervention, *International Journal of Therapy & Comparative Criminology*



Some Research Explorations

Examination of **incident and perpetrator** characteristics of 3 forms of elder maltreatment (physical, emotional, and sexual mistreatment) & if these characteristics differed by victims' sex in large, nationally representative sample of US older people (highlights: **Perpetrator social isolation and substance misuse**).

Amstadter et al (2011) Do Incident and Perpetrator Characteristics of Elder Mistreatment Differ by Gender of the Victim? Results from the National Elder Mistreatment Study, *Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect*, 23(1)
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4017657/>

The 'so
what' and
'what
works'
questions
and at what
cost?



Responses to perpetrators

- Keep away eg DBS, professional bodies
- Rehabilitation
- Safeguarding (and support) plans & monitoring
- Conviction and restitution
- Conviction and treatment
- Spent convictions –fresh start



Therapy (broadly defined)

- Who does what in this area?
- How do you know?
- What's the access route?
- Where is this in SAB business and working documents eg Strategy?



Small steps: Care Act 2014

- Safeguarding Adult Reviews
(replacing Serious Case Reviews)
- Should Terms of Reference include
contact with abusers?
- How to engage them?
- How to do this well?
- Lessons from Children's and
Domestic Homicide Reviews



Local steps?



- Testing of systems of information sharing and new duties and expectations
- Establish relationships with Probation/NOMS colleagues or more shared training, or SAB membership?
- What does good HR look like for employed perpetrators?

Complicated by Victims' varied views of perpetrators (but that is another subject)

- My friend
- My family
- My feelings
 - Betrayal
 - Guilt
 - Duped
 - Incredulity
 - Denial



Conclusions



- Value of data collecting
- Get and use good case accounts
- See as part of Making Safeguarding Personal
- Thinking hats on
- Imagine what could have prevented abuse & neglect
- Think perpetrator as well as adult at risk

Acknowledgement and Disclaimer

This presentation presents independent research funded by the Department of Health

The views expressed in this presentation are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Department of Health

Thank you for listening

