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*Cultivating a Culture
of Caring for Older Adults*

Medical Aspects of Elder Abuse

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- ABIM Disclosure

- Understand the relationship of ageism and elder abuse
- Learn the types of elder abuse
- Know reporting requirements
- Appreciate the role of mental illness in elder abuse
- Know the negative consequences of elder abuse

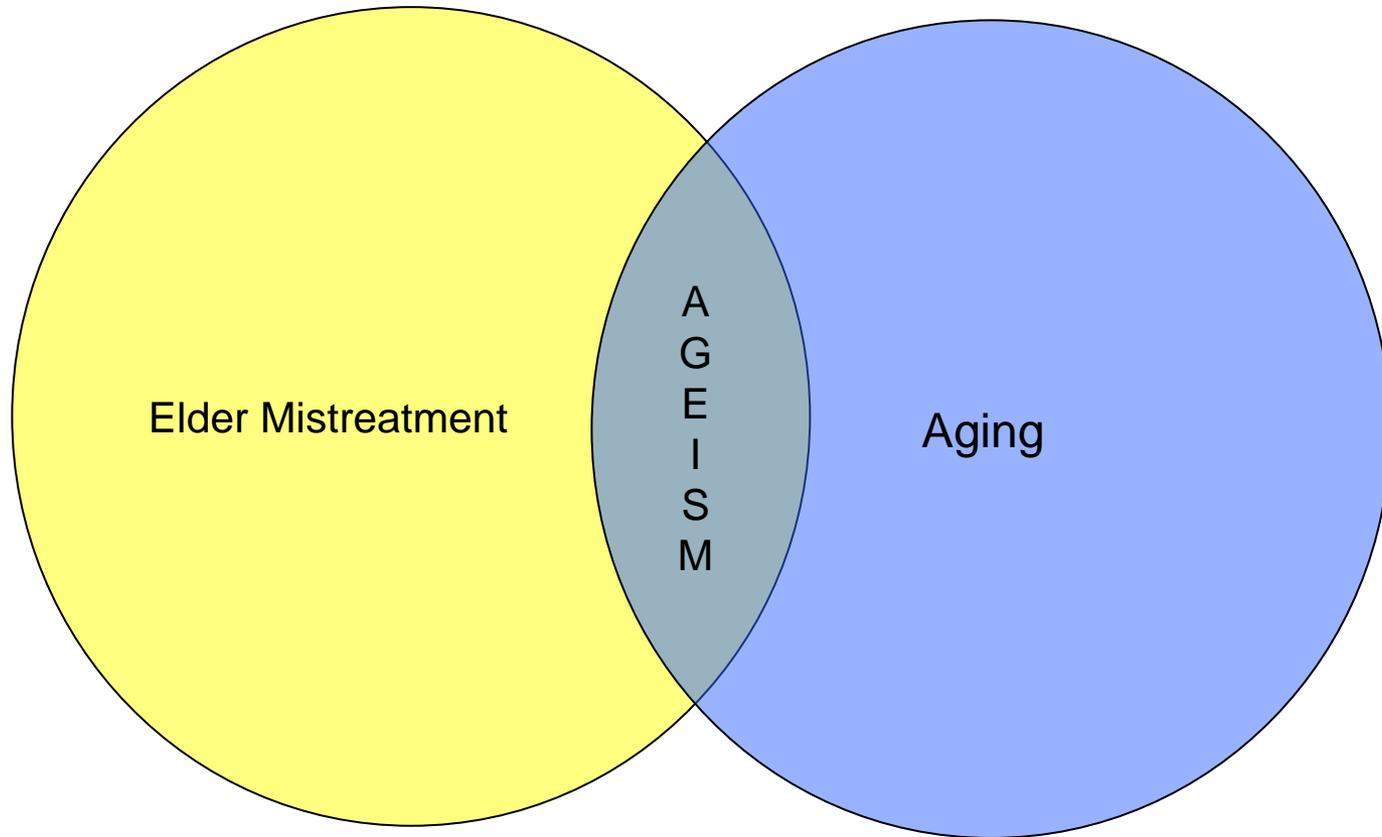
- **World Health Organization**

“Elder abuse is a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person. This type of violence constitutes a violation of human rights and includes physical, sexual, psychological, emotional; financial and material abuse; abandonment; neglect; and serious loss of dignity and respect.”

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Society



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Myths of Aging

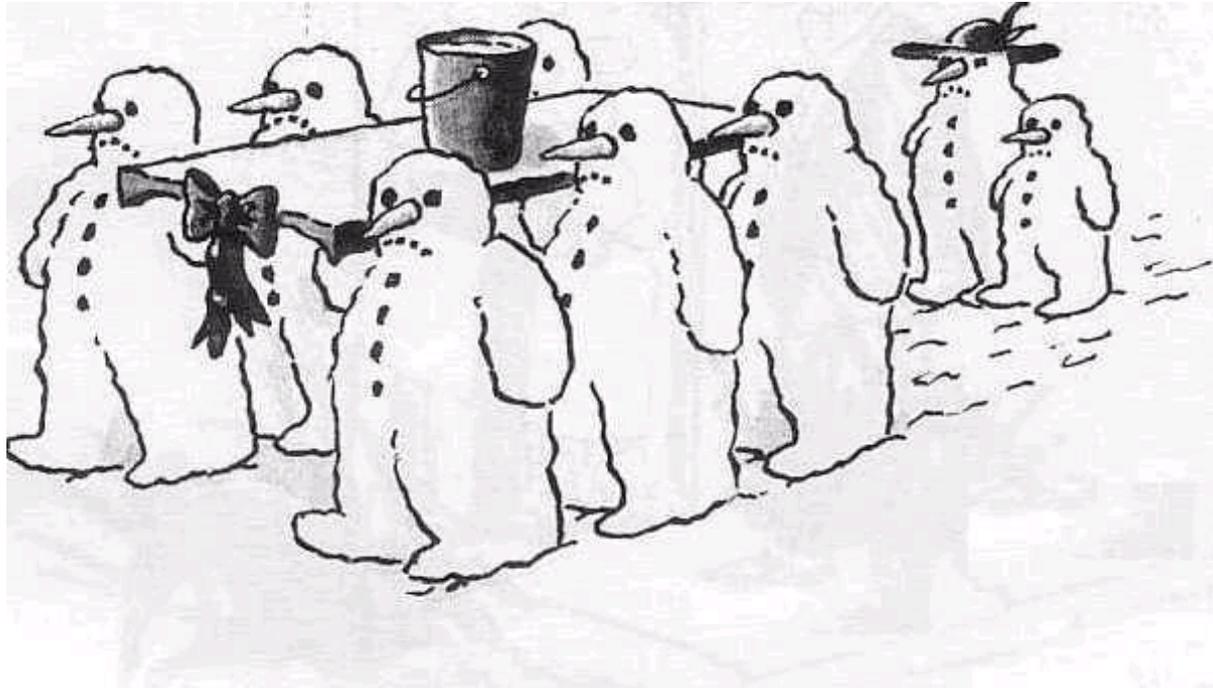
- ‘Sweet old lady’ or.....’crotchety old man’
- “Losing memory is part of growing old.”
- “Bruising is normal.”
- “Old people are supposed to die.”

“All he did was lift her nightgown
and rub her breasts. Nobody got hurt.”

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Cause of Death: Natural



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Incidence of Elder Abuse



FOR EVERY REPORT OF ABUSE

23.5 CASES GO
UNREPORTED

Lifespan of Greater Rochester, Inc., Weill Cornell Medical Center of Cornell University, and New York City Department for the Aging. (2011). *Under the Radar: New York State Elder Abuse Prevalence Study.*

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Elder Abuse in California



**EVERY 3 MINUTES AN
ELDER
OR DEPENDENT ADULT IN
CALIFORNIA IS ABUSED.**

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For every one case of financial abuse
known, 44 remain unknown



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“Go where the money is... and go there often.”



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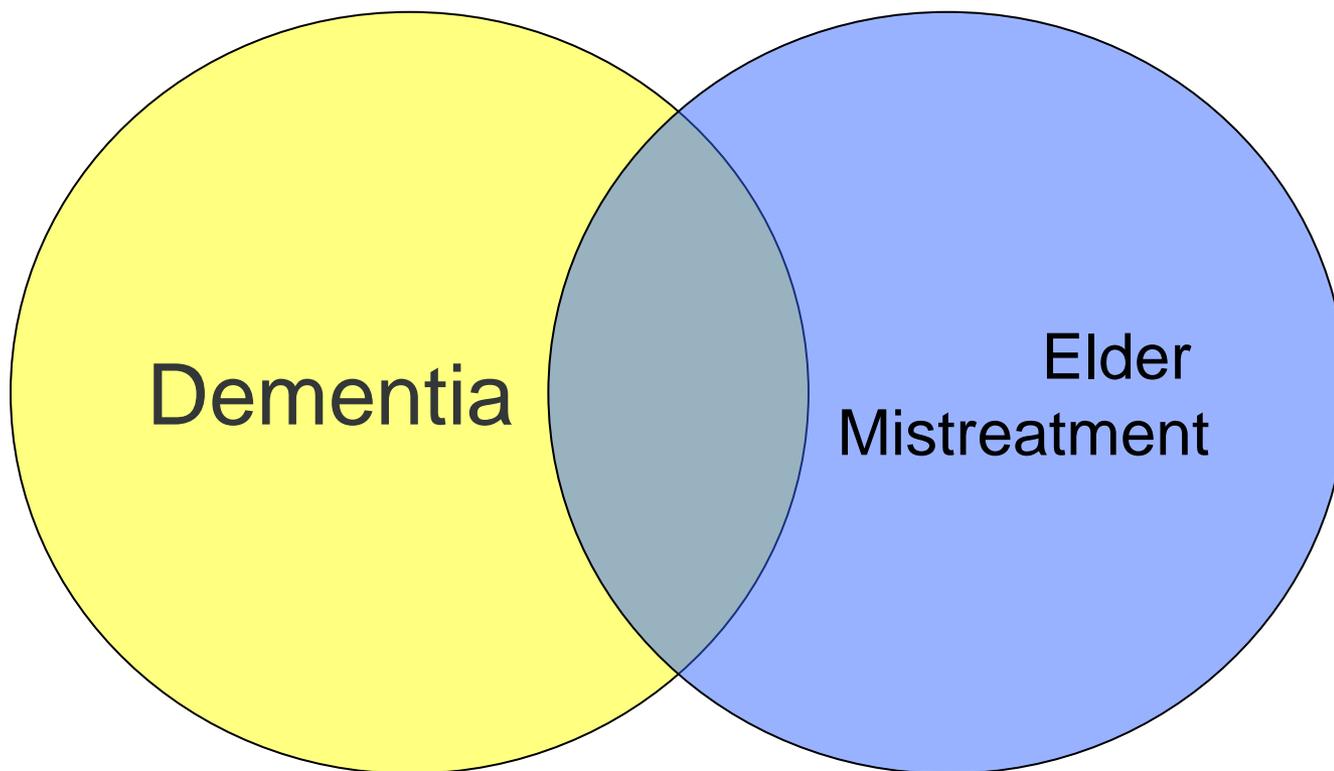
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Target: Older Adults

- Profile: senior, history of being victimized by fraud, retirement savings, pensions, SS
- *Telephone scams*
- *Lotteries*
- *Sweetheart scams*
- *Home repair*

Who?

- Increased risk if history of family abuse
- # of ADL impairments
- Those who abuse caregivers (dementia)
- Those with depression
- Cognitive impairment



Dementia: A Major Risk Factor for Elder Abuse

**NEARLY 1 IN 2 PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA
EXPERIENCE SOME FORM OF ABUSE BY OTHERS.**



**AN ESTIMATED 5.2
MILLION AMERICANS
HAVE
ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE.**

¹ Cooper, C., et al. (2009). *British Medical Journal*, 338, b155

² Wiglesworth, A., et al. (2010). *JAGS*, 58, 493-500

³ Alzheimer's Association (2013). *Alzheimer's Facts & Figures*



the most terrible poverty is loneliness,
and the feeling of being unloved.

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Low self-reporting

- Fear of consequences
- Shame and embarrassment
- Fear of removal from home
- Fear of INS in immigrations cases
- Fear of consequences to abuser
- Feeling overwhelmed

Who are the abusers?

- Caregiver with a substance abuse problem
- Caregiver with a mental illness
- Transgenerational violence
- History of unemployment
- Caregivers dependent on victim for finances or housing
- Caregivers abused by the victim
- Increased caregiving stress

- When you provide a significant, separately identifiable, medically necessary Evaluation and Management (E/M) service in addition to the AWW, Medicare may pay for the additional service.
- Report the Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) code with modifier -25. That portion of the visit must be medically necessary to treat the beneficiary's illness or injury or to improve the functioning of a malformed body member.

- King Lear

“How sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is to have a thankless child”

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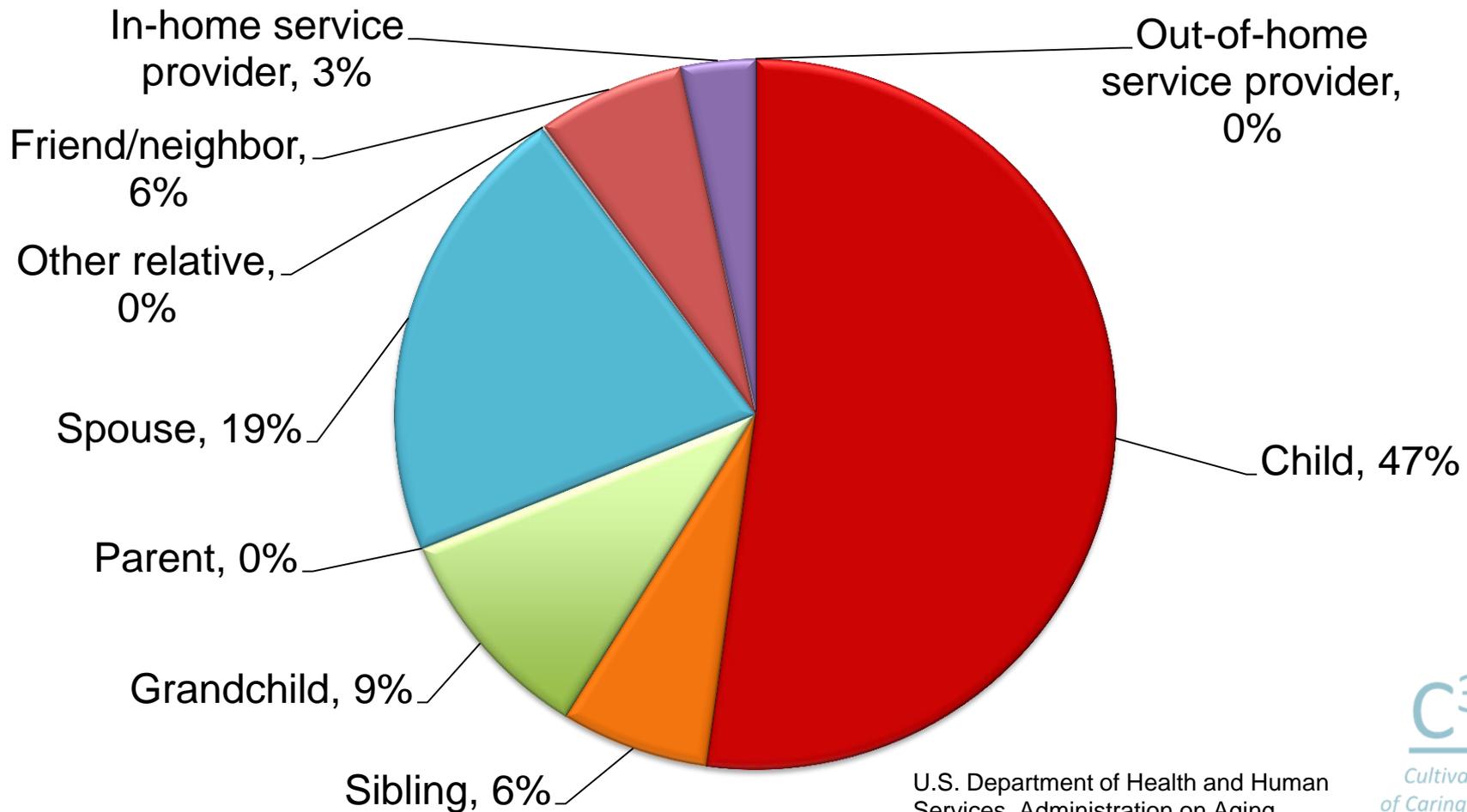
Who abuses?

- 90% of perpetrators are relatives
 - Often these family members suffer from a substance abuse or mental health disorder¹
- Of these, nearly half are adult children
- 52% are men
- 30% are themselves over 60 years old



¹ Jorgerst, G. et al. *American J of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, 38, 63-69

Perpetrators: Relationship to Victim



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging

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Negative Consequences of Elder Abuse

- Elder abuse victims
 - Are *twice as likely to be hospitalized* than other seniors¹
 - Are *four times more likely* than non-abused older adults *to go into nursing homes*²
 - Can be *exploited to the extent that they turn to Medicaid* as a result of their losses⁴
 - Annual financial loss of elder financial exploitation was an estimated *\$2.9 billion* in 2009, a 12% increase from 2008⁵
 - Have a *mortality rate three times greater* than others in their age group³

¹ Dong, X. & Simon, M.A. (2013) *JAMA Intern Med*, 173, 911-17

² Rovi, S., et al. (2009), *J Elder Abuse & Neglect*, 21, 346-59

³ Lachs, M.S., et al. (1998). *JAMA*, 280, 428-32

⁴ Gunther, J. (2011). <http://www.dhs.utah.gov/pdf/utah-financial-exploitation-study.pdf>

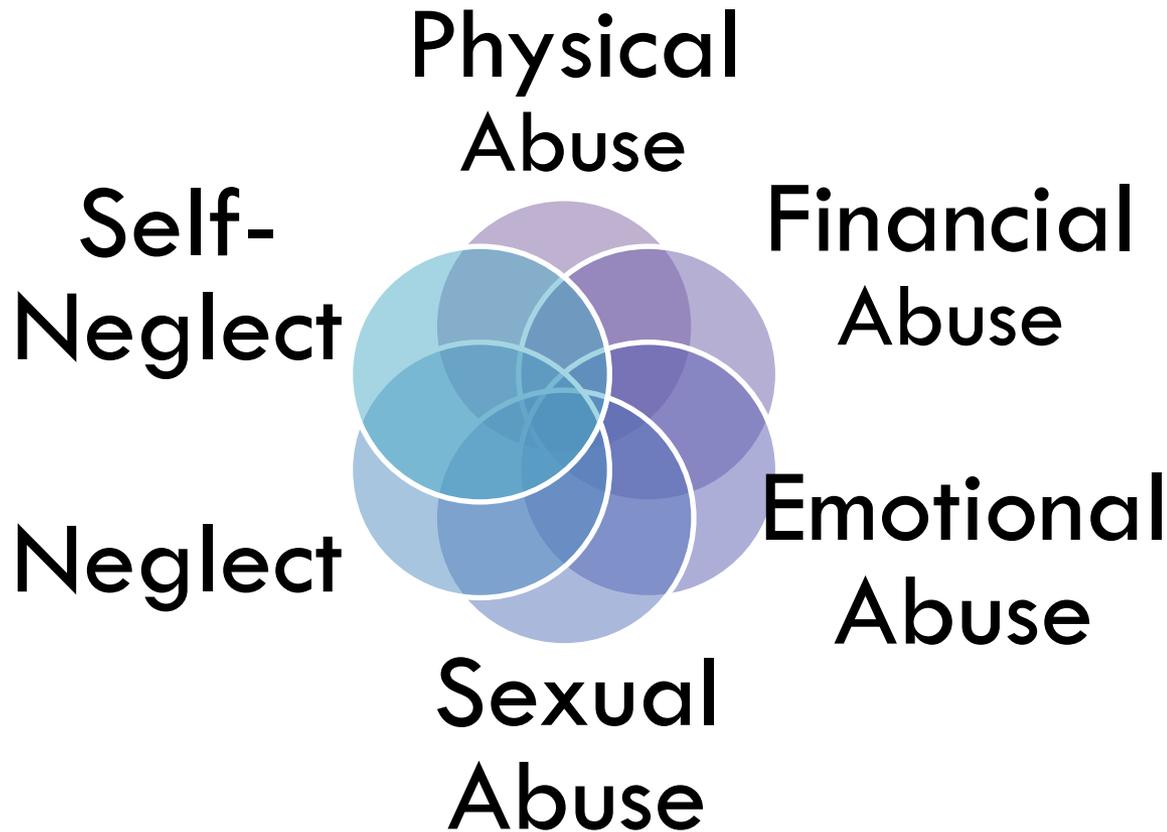
⁵ National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, Virginia Tech, Metlife Mature Market Institute (2011)

Red Flag Situations



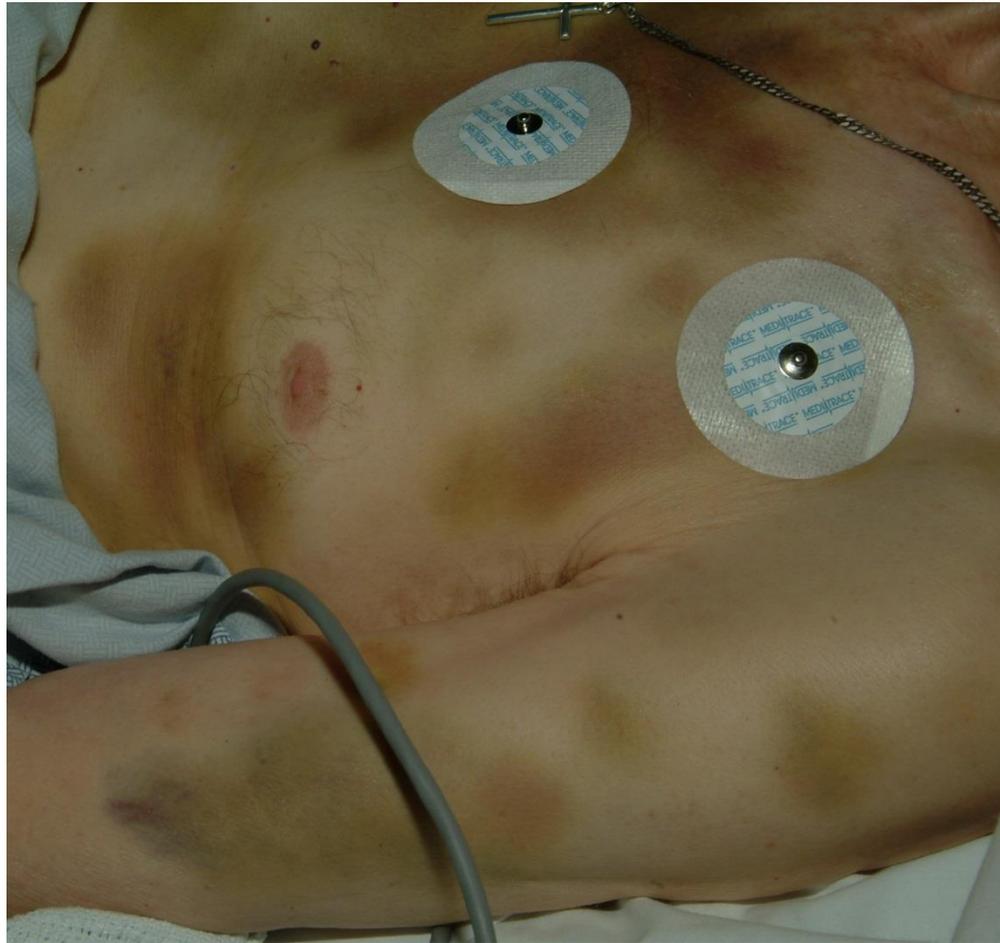
Caregivers with inadequately treated mental health and/or substance abuse problems who also...

- Feel burdened, resentful and are providing care for . . .
- An older adult who is physically combative and/or verbally abusive



Medical Detectives

- What is normal? What is abnormal?
 - “old age”
- Signs for disease processes may overlap with signs for abuse or neglect
- Consider elder abuse in the differential





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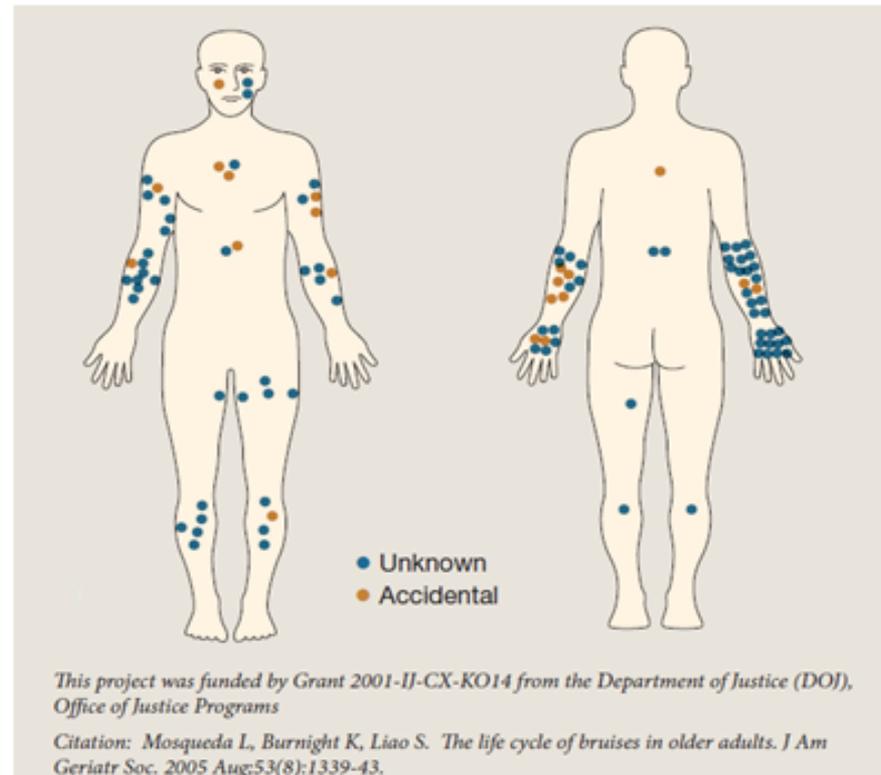
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PART I: Accidental Bruising in Older Adults



Key findings from a study of **accidental bruising in older adults**:

- **Color of a bruise did not indicate its age.** A bruise could have any color from day one.
- **90% of accidental bruises were on the extremities** rather than the trunk, neck or head.
- **Less than a quarter of older adults with accidental bruises remembered** how they got them.
- **Older adults taking medications** that interfere with coagulation pathways were more likely to have **multiple bruises**, but the bruises **did not last any longer** than the bruises of those who didn't take these medications.



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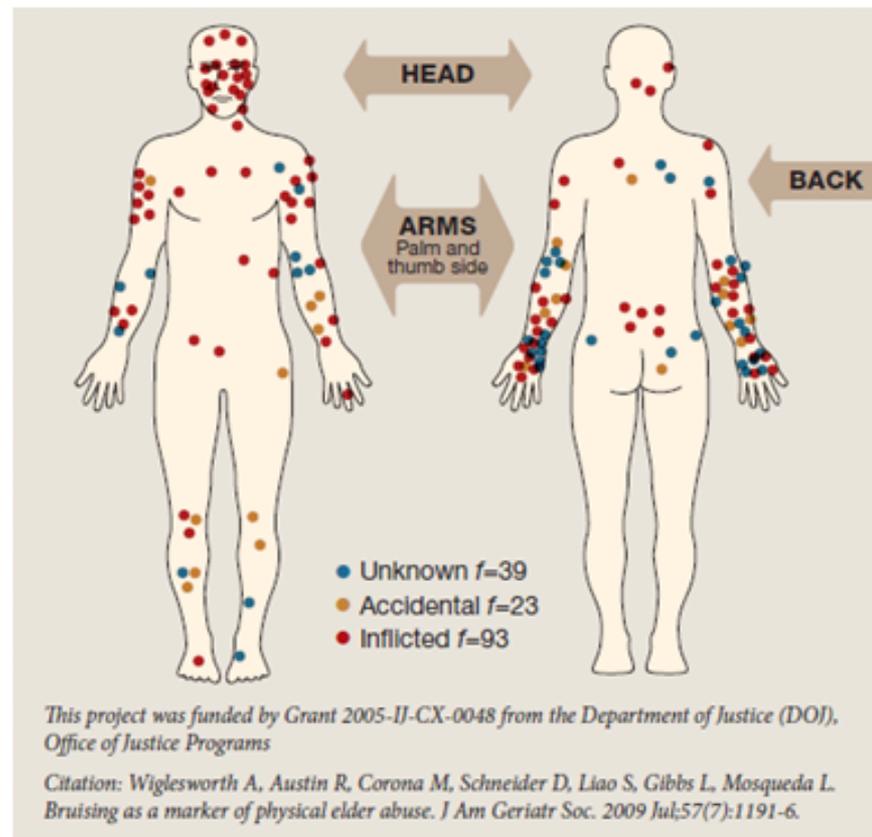
PART II: Bruising in Older Adults as Reported by Abused Elders

Key findings from this study:

- **Bruises were large.** More than half of older adults with bruises who had been physically abused had at least one bruise **5 cm (about 2 inches) in diameter or larger.**

- Older adults with bruises who had been abused had **more bruises in areas indicated with tan arrows** than older adults whose bruises were accidental.

- **90%** of older adults with bruises who have been physically abused **can tell you how they got their bruises, and this includes many older adults with memory problems and dementia.**

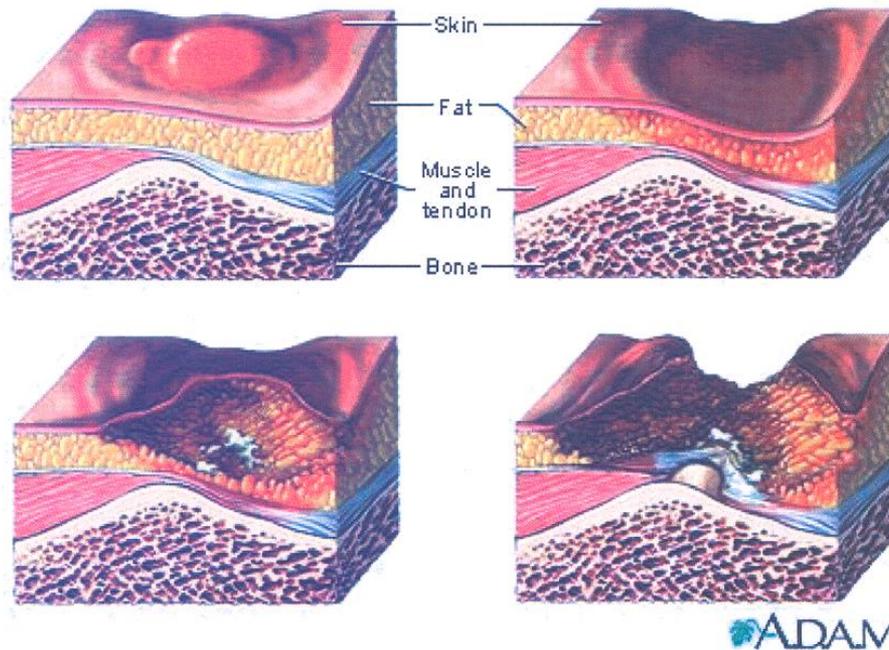


Burns

- Persons over the age of 65 have 2X the national average death rate due to burns
- Studies reveal that 36%-70% of burns in adult abuse were due to abuse and neglect (Bowden 1998; Burns 1998)

Pressure Sores

Progression of decubitus ulcer



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- Strangulation
- Falls
- Head trauma
- Malnutrition
- Failure to thrive

Impact on Mental Health

Mental Illness in Child

Dementia in Parent

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- 78 yo with hx of stroke, cared for by son who lives with her
- 911 when she was unresponsive
- 5'6", 95 lbs., multiple pressure sores, maggots in sores
- Patient verbally abusive and demanding but wants to be cared for by him
- Son with disheveled appearance and filthy
- He states that she never wanted to go to the doctor.

When the carer is abused

- Aging parents caring for mentally ill adult children
 - Years of care does not allow for separation from the child
 - Exploring preparation for the end of life: departure scripts

Departure scripts an life review of parents living with abusive adult children with mental disorder, *Journal of Aging Studies*; 34 (2015) 48-56

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- Increased vulnerability for parents caring for dependent children due to a physical or mental disability.
- Difficulties in the normative parent-child separation process
 - Abnormal separation process may cause symbiosis, enmeshment and differentiating between self and others.

Mahler (1968). On human symbiosis and the vicissitudes of individuation:
International Universities Press, NY

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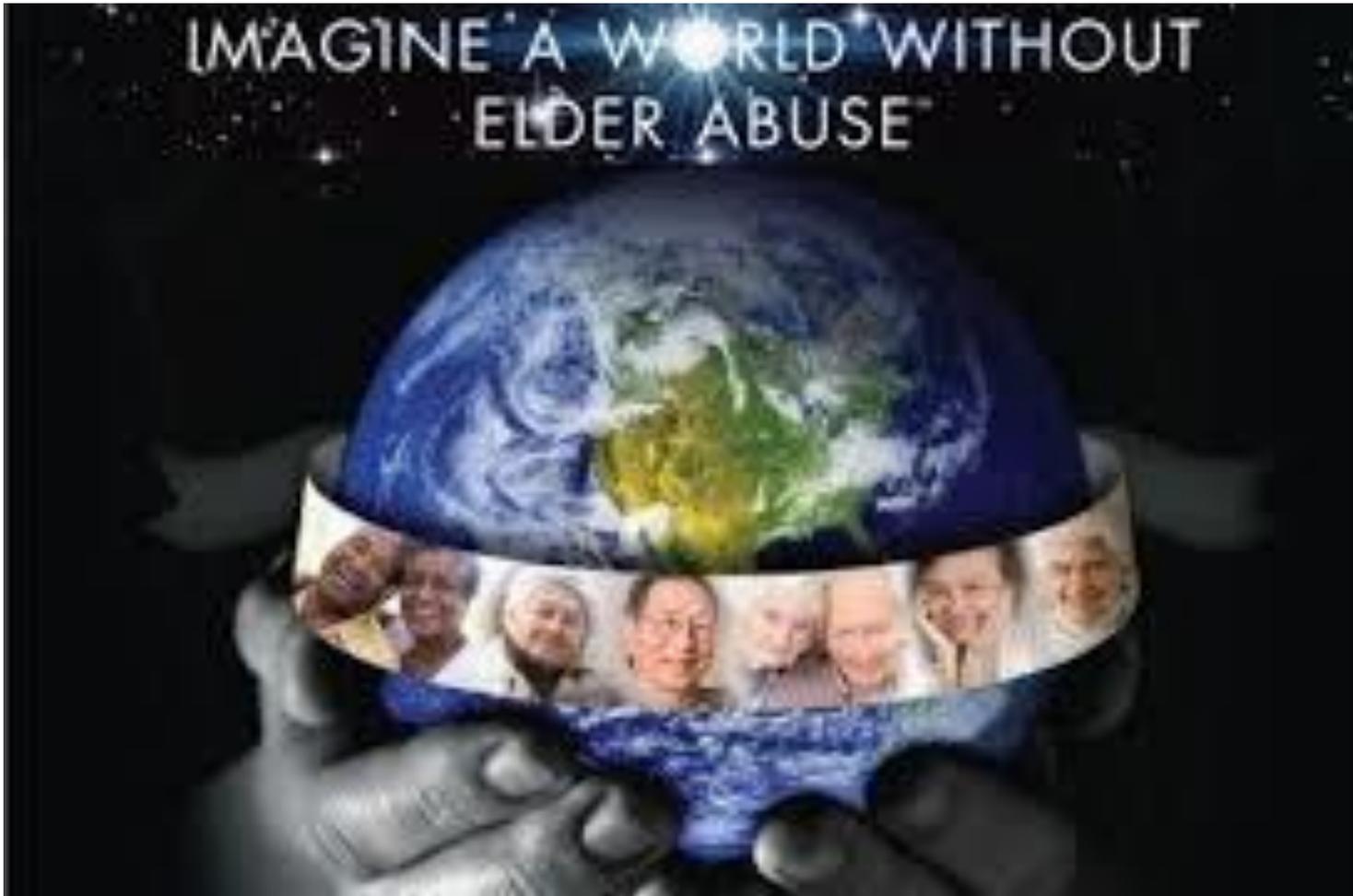
- Parents of abusive children with mental disorders perceive themselves as responsible for their families
- May see children as ‘harmed and ‘harmful’
- Eternal parenting

- Where do we need to go?
 - Recognize prevalence of mental illness in elder abuse
 - Bidirectional
 - Take the shame away from aging, elder abuse and mental illness
 - Ensure adequate treatment and housing for those who are dependent yet acting as caregivers

Mandated Reporting

- IPV- Domestic Abuse
 - Providing medical service to a patient who is suffering from a physical injury due to a firearm or assaultive or abusive conduct.

- Child Abuse- suspicion of abuse
- **Elder Abuse-suspicion of abuse**
 - Adult Protective Services (community)
 - Ombudsman (facilities)



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