



CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF CARING FOR OLDER ADULTS

Red flags for identifying elder abuse

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Fractures, burns, abrasions, bruises, hair or tooth loss, new hoarseness (strangulation)

- 📍 **Does the story fit the injury?**

SEXUAL ABUSE

Genital or anal pain, irritation, or bleeding, bruises on inner thighs, new difficulty walking or sitting, or patient complaint

- 📍 **Usual personal care should not cause these symptoms**
- 📍 **Elder victims should be referred for a formal assessment by a sexual abuse response team**

PSYCHOLOGICAL/EMOTIONAL/VERBAL ABUSE

Stress-related conditions, including elevated blood pressure, problems sleeping, depression, fear of caregivers

- 📍 **Coexists with other types of abuse**
- 📍 **May be precursor for other types of abuse**

FINANCIAL ABUSE

New "best friends", unpaid bills, eviction notices, unusual activity in bank accounts, will, trusts, or deeds, patients being taken from nursing homes back to home care

- 📍 **Truly often the "root of all evil" and root cause of other types of abuse, especially neglect**
- 📍 **Follow the money**

NEGLECT/SELF-NEGLECT

Poor personal hygiene, bedsores, absence of necessities including food, water, or heat, animal or insect infestation, medication mismanagement

- 📍 **Caregivers may have alcohol, drugs, or mental illness problems**



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Facts

- About **10%** of older adults suffer from elder abuse each month.
- The question is not **IF** but **WHO** in your medical practice is affected by elder abuse.
- Elder abuse **causes suffering and increases both morbidity and mortality**
 - Dong, X. & Simon, M.A. (2013) *JAMA Intern Med*, 173, 911-17
 - Rovi, S., et al. (2009), *J Elder Abuse & Neglect*, 21, 346-59
 - Lachs, M.S., et al. (1998). *JAMA*, 280, 428-32
- Healthcare providers are mandated reporters, but make very few reports.

Who To Call

When you have “reasonable suspicion” that an older or dependent adult is being abused or neglected, call:

- **Adult Protective Services (APS)** for people living in the community ☎️ **1-231-351-5401**
- **Long-Term Care Ombudsman in LA** for people living in a long-term care facility
☎️ **1-800-334-9473** (if calling between 8am-5pm) or **1-800-231-4024** (if calling between 5pm-8am)
- **Elder Abuse Hotline** ☎️ **1-877-477-3646**
- **Law enforcement** or in case of **Emergency** ☎️ **9-1-1**
- **Area Agency on Aging** for information on resources and services for older adults in LA
☎️ **1-800-510-2020**