

Title

The Abuse Intervention Model: A Pragmatic Approach to Intervention for Elder Mistreatment

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Source

Webinar ([recording located here](#))

Summary of Research

Ten percent of older adults experience elder mistreatment, and it is much more common in older adults with dementia. It is associated with higher rates of psychological distress, hospitalization, and death and, in the United States, costs billions of dollars each year. Although elder mistreatment is relatively common and costly, it is estimated that fewer than 10% of instances of elder mistreatment are reported. Given these data, there is a great need for research on interventions to prevent and mitigate elder mistreatment and for a practical model or framework to use in approaching such interventions. Although many theories have been proposed, adapted, and applied to understand elder mistreatment, there has not been a simple, coherent framework of known risk factors of the victim, perpetrator, and environment that applies to all types of abuse. This webinar presents a new model to examine the multi-dimensional and complex relationships between risk factors.

The Abuse Intervention Model (AIM) covers three domains of elder mistreatment risk factors.

The Abuse Intervention Model (AIM) covers three domains related to elder mistreatment along with the risk factors in each. (1) Vulnerable older adult: Vulnerability, such as impaired physical function, poor cognition, or emotional distress/mental illness, places older adults at higher risk. (2) Trusted other: Risk factors include perceived burden, impaired physical function, or emotional distress/mental illness. (3) Context in which older adult and trusted other interact plays an important role as well: low-quality relationship, social isolation, and cultural norms. Two case studies were presented, and risk factors of the three domains were identified.

Theories of elder mistreatment, research on risk factors for elder mistreatment, and 10 years of experience of faculty and staff at an Elder Abuse Forensics Center who have investigated more than 1,000 cases of elder mistreatment inform this model. It is hoped that the Abuse Intervention Model will be used to study and intervene in elder mistreatment.

When high-frequency risk profiles are identified, a toolkit of interventions specific to that profile could be developed and deployed.

Practice & Policy Implications

The two case studies illustrated how the Abuse Intervention Model may be used to provide clinicians and other professionals such as social workers, Adult Protective Services, and forensics center staff with a framework to assess risk factors for elder mistreatment from the perspective of the vulnerable older adult, the trusted other, and the context in which they interact. Identifying risk factors can help professionals prevent, identify, investigate, and address the salient and modifiable risk factors to mitigate mistreatment. For example, in using the Abuse Intervention Model, particular risk profiles may be seen frequently. When high-frequency risk profiles are identified, a toolkit of interventions specific to that profile could be developed and deployed. Furthermore, if the Abuse Intervention Model is useful in identifying and addressing elder mistreatment, it may help guide public policy and allocation of resources to prevent and address elder mistreatment.

Further Reading

Mosqueda, L., Burnight, K., Gironda, M. W., Moore, A. A., Robinson, J., & Olsen, B. (2016). *The abuse intervention model: a pragmatic approach to intervention for elder mistreatment*. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 64(9), 1879-1883.

Wiglesworth, A., Mosqueda, L., Mulnard, R., Liao, S., Gibbs, L., & Fitzgerald, W. (2010). *Screening for abuse and neglect of people with dementia*. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 58(3), 493-500.

Burnight K, Mosqueda L. *Theoretical Model Development in Elder Mistreatment*. *National Criminal Justice Reference Service [on-line]*. Available at <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/234488.pdf> Accessed February 12, 2016.

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