
POSTER ABSTRACT

Elderly Abuse: the importance of a scientific and a participatory approach

23rd International Conference on Integrated Care, Antwerp, Flanders, 22-24 May 2023

Els Messelis¹, Dieter Vanoutrive

1: Odisee Advanced Education, Brussels, Belgium

Introduction: The world population of older adults, aged 60 and older, will double from 542 million in 1995 to 1.2 billion in 2025. Despite the fact that many of them are in good health, more and more people will face dementia, multiple problems and elder abuse (WHO, 2021).

In this abstract, we will concentrate on elder abuse, which is a complex and multifactorial problem but moreover a taboo subject which needs more community awareness.

Purpose: Human rights and people's health of older adults are being violated and this needs to be addressed on a massive scale. Efforts have already been done in developing scientific insights concerning early diagnosis, risk and protective factors as well as evidence-based interventions.

The problem is that professionals and organizations in our country often work above, under or next to each other on the subject. Moreover, the voices of older adults are neglected. Therefore we are making a call to cooperate in a participatory way. Integrated care will be the future to prevent elder abuse and to cope with it. We can't do it alone.

Methods: In 2022 we could raise awareness through public involvement as both were invited in two programs on the Belgian Television:

Canvas TV Documentary 'Als je eens wist' – series 3 – Canvas (made by Hilde Van Mieghem) – May 10th 2022: Rating: 189.158.

Canvas Contact Webinar 'Hoe doorbreek je het taboe van ouderenmis(be)handeling' (Interviewer Joris Hessels) - May 16th 2022: Rating: >100.

Results: In both programs we raised the importance of breaking the taboo, the need for professional cooperation and the importance to listen to the voices of older adults through storytelling. In the Webinar we also could come in discussion with the audience. So we could address the health demands.

Afterwards, co-design approach was set up by Odisee Advanced Education in cooperation with Vlaams Ondersteuningscentrum Ouderenmis(be)handeling (VLOCO), organizing an event called 'Elderly Care is Safe Hands – The Power of Multidisciplinary Cooperation' – 01st December 2022 – Brussels. Messelis e.a. will present an 'Intervention Piramide on Elder Abuse' to involve all kinds of professional organizations on different levels. Also a panel debate will be set up with different organizations and professionals.

Conclusions: Our insights teach us that a very long way has already been made in terms of attention to elder abuse. Despite the many new insights and impact analyses, the topic of elder

abuse remains a taboo and underappreciated problem. Only the tip of the iceberg is ever revealed.

If we want to tackle the problem, we have to break the taboo and cooperate in a participatory way. Therefore we want to discuss with the international audience to learn other Evidence Based Practices. We also have a wake -up call for the legislator in order to create a clear legal framework. Governments can also do more to prevent and address elder abuse but also to support professional equipment's and 'antennas'. We never stand alone.