

Management issues  
*in*  
**GERIATRIC CARE**

GC

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## **Management Issues in Geriatric Care (Collection of articles)**

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# Elder Abuse

Anand Amball

## DEFINITION

'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'

## TYPES WITH EXAMPLES:

No	Type	Example
1.	Physical	Slapping, hitting, pushing, striking with an object, bruising, burning, scalding, force feeding, incorrect positioning in bed or chair
2.	Psychological	Habitual verbal aggression, threats, insults, humiliating name calling, intimidation, threats of institutionalization & social isolation
3.	Financial	Forge the elder's signature, suspicious changes in wills, power of attorney, titles, and policies.
4.	Sexual	Unwanted touching or fondling, showing porn pictures
5.	Neglect	Failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, hygiene, or social stimulation

## MANAGEMENT

### 1) older people who are abused

*"If we don't ask, & the person does not speak of it, the abuse will not be recognized".*

Our role is to identify abuse and manage the ill effects on the health of the person who is abused. Our limitation is, we cannot interfere in personal issues of a given family.

Hence, it is recommended for clinicians that instead of viewing abuse as a disease, it should be looked as a co-morbid and risk factor for various diseases.

Clinicians should incorporate questions regarding abuse in their routine questionnaire regarding abuse.

- Listen to the older people- It looks time consuming but helps prevent the negative impact of it on their health.
- Have empathy and do not react to the situation.
- Allow them to open-up, call him/her for follow up on alternative days. Use this time to explore and counselling.

- d) Develop confidence building measures, so that you can do direct questioning, which makes the older people to share their plight.
- e) Dramatic relief occurs in victims of abuse when a clinician verbally recognizes an emotional state the patient is in or helps patient express an emotion.
- f) These emotions can often be recognized from clues in the patient's or abuser's behaviour. These clues sometimes being like "cries for help".
- g) Always ask for suicidal thoughts if you suspect abuse and intervene.
- h) If elderly has mental illness/extreme suffering, shift him to hospital
- i) Educate them to keep their engaged by rediscovering old hobbies like painting, listening to music, reading.
- j) History of substance abuse if present, seek counselling
- k) Maintenance & Welfare of Parents & Senior Citizens Act 2007 has been in action for the benefit of senior citizen. All the clinicians should know the salient features and guide the older people to seek assistance from appropriate authority.
- l) A son when approaches a clinician for a certificate stating that his father is old and cannot sign. I, strongly recommend not to entertain such requests unless the elderly is examined by you personally. Or else this leads to financial abuse and the elderly is left with no money.

2) **Abuser** – (Son, Daughter, Son in law, Daughter in law, Spouse, brother and Sister)

- a) Know his personal relations with other family members.
- b) History of substance abuse – Psychological counselling
- c) Business Failure – Counselling along with family members and let them solve the issue amicably
- d) Depression or Schizophrenia -Psychiatrist opinion
- e) Adjustment Disorder – Counselling
- f) If has a criminal record / cause severe physical injury – to lodge police complaint by family member

## CONCLUSION

Multidisciplinary approach involving physician, social organization, best friend, psychiatric counsellor, legal advisor, care giver should be involved and counselling should be initiated that continues over weeks to settle the issue and in helping elderly to come out of the suffering.

The suspected abuser should be assessed as thoroughly as the victim of abuse.

Please not that "Not all senior citizens are saints, nor all youngsters are sinners". We should always take history form family members at different times.

Be it known– When an elder is abused by own family members, it is hard for them to trust an outsider. Hence develop trust and allow them to open-up.



It is Very sensitive issue and needs experience in handling such situations.  
Allow frequent visits and seek help from psychiatrist help overcome the tide  
*June 15 is observed as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day every year.*

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