SCREENING TOOLS FOR ELDER ABUSE: EVALUATION AND IMPLEMENTATION IN IRELAND

Dr. Amanda Phelan
Co-Director
National Centre for the Protection of Older People (NCPOPOP)
University College Dublin
amanda.phelan@ucd.ie
Background: Irish Response to Elder Abuse


- Elder Abuse National Implementation Group
- Dedicated elder abuse service (2007)
  - National Elder Abuse Steering Group
  - 4 Dedicated officers for elder abuse
  - 32 Senior case workers (SCW) posts

Irish 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 or violates their human and civil rights’

Protecting our Future (2002).
Elder Abuse Prevalence studies- 2-5% (O’Keefe et al., 2007, Naughton et al. 2010).

‘Impressionistic estimates’ (Bonnie & Wallace 2003)

HSE referrals vs. prevalence
Screening

• **Purpose**: the early identification of risk of a disease or disorder so that early treatment may be initiated resulting in a decrease in the disease related mortality and morbidity rates (United States Preventative Services Task Force 1996; Petersen 1997).

• The traditional paradigm of screening programmes is unrealistic for elder abuse if a traditional disease–model analysis is applied (Lachs 2004)
Screening tools

• Issues such as abuser involvement in care, active efforts to hide the abuse and possible limited access to the older person may preclude screening (Lachs & Pillemer 2004).

• The United States Preventative Service Task Force on Family Violence (1996; 2004) has not recommended universal use of screening tools.

• Rationalisation of resource allocation, improved education and improved responses; although case investigation should not weaken a focus on protection (Bonnie & Wallace 2003).
Tools

• Minimise bias
• Discursive orientation of the questions
• Culturally neutral
• Contextualised within social behaviours and non-threatening language (Laumann et al. 2008)
• Rapport.
• Self-completed, telephone interview, practitioner questioning

Technology
Elder Abuse Screening

• **Terms**: indexes of abuse, instruments to identify risk of abuse, elder abuse questionnaires, elder abuse screening tools, elder abuse screening test, algorithms, protocols and elder abuse assessment
Aims of review of EA screening tools

- To examine elder abuse screening tools internationally and identify a tool(s) of particular merit for potential use in the Irish context
- To identify issues related to the use of elder abuse screening tools internationally
- To make recommendations regarding the use of elder abuse screening tools in the Irish context.

(Phelan & Treacy 2011)
Choice

• The choice for an appropriate screening tool must take into account the balance between brevity and comprehensiveness (Rabin et al. 2009) while also demonstrating accuracy and ease of use (Bonnie & Wallace 2003).

• Note: Mental capacity, long term care
Reviewed

- The Hwalek-Sengstock Elder Abuse Screening Test
- Vulnerability Abuse Screening Scale
- The Elder Assessment instrument
- The Indicators of Abuse Screen
- The Brief Abuse Screen for the Elderly
- The Caregiver Abuse Screen
- The Elder Abuse Suspicion Index
- Elder Psychological Abuse Scale
- Caregivers Psychological Elder Abuse Behaviour Scale
- Older Adult Psychological Abuse Measure
- The Older Adult Financial Exploitation Measure
Protocols (non-validated)

- American Medical Association’s *Diagnostic and Treatment Guidelines on Elder Abuse and Neglect* (1992)

- Screening Tools and a Referral Protocol (STRP) Benjamin Rose Institute, Ohio (Bass *et al.* 2001). Five sections: Introduction, Referral Protocol, Actual Abuse Screen, Suspected Abuse Screening Tool and Risk of Abuse Screening Tool
Challenges

• Interpretation of elder abuse.
• Traditional disease orientated approaches
• Items within screening tools are often based on overt signs of abuse which makes the recognition of subtle abuse challenging.

Psychometrics
Challenges

- Raising practitioner awareness through education may override a reliance on screening tools (Lachs & Pillemer 2004).
- Mental Incapacity
- Setting (acute/LTC/Domestic)
Following the review two screening tools were chosen to pilot in Ireland:

- Elder Abuse Suspicion Index (Yaffe et al. 2008)
- Older Adult Financial Exploitation Measure (Conrad et al. 2010)
Elder Abuse Suspicion Index (EASI)

- **Pilot study to test the reliability of the Elder Abuse Suspicion Index in an Irish Context**
- 2 Hospitals (Geriatrician, social workers, ED nurses), 2 Local Health Areas (Public Health Nurses & Community Registered Nurses) and General Practitioners.
- Tool survey: Healthcare professionals
- Cognitive interviewing
EASI

• Offered to all older people with capacity (Sept-Jan.
• Capacity determined by 6 Cognitive Impairment Test (Kingshill 2000)
• If abuse suspected- follow usual protocol for referral. EASI not forwarded to Senior Case Worker.
• **Aim**: 1,600 screens with anticipated 160 SCW referrals
• Referrals tracked to SCW assessment and analysis focus will be the establishment of positive predictive value of EASI.
• **Pilot study to test the appropriateness of the Older Adult Financial Exploitation Measure in an Irish Context.**

• **Tool survey:** Healthcare professionals & Cognitive interviewing

• OAFEM will be offered to all older people who are referred to Senior Case Worker (Sept-Jan).

• Analysis: identification of Financial abuse and outcomes will be compared to previous statistics of HSE referral typology
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