



Elder Abuse Week 15 - 22 June 2017

Elder abuse and neglect are often hidden and victims are frequently afraid to acknowledge it. Such abuse can be physical, psychological or emotional, sexual and/or financial in nature. It can also be the result of intentional or unintentional neglect. The perpetrator of such abuse may be someone very close to the elderly person.

The Ministry of Social Development's Office For Senior Citizens have done the first research into elder abuse in New Zealand, based on the New Zealand Longitudinal Study of Ageing (NZLSA). This research shows the vast majority of older people are safe and are not experiencing or at risk of abuse and neglect. A number of specific groups of older people face higher rates of abuse, including women, Maori and those who are separated, divorced or widowed.

Key findings:

- Around one in ten older people did report some form of abuse (most closely linked to vulnerability and coercion).
- There were significant differences between women and men. Women experienced a greater sense of vulnerability, dependence and dejection. However men experienced higher levels of coercion.
- Older people who were divorced, separated or widowed people felt considerably more sad and lonely, or were uncomfortable with someone in their family
- Older Maori experienced a significantly greater level of abuse than non-Maori, reporting coercion at 2.5 times the rate for non-Maori.
- Statistics associated with elder abuse showed a significant reduction in physical and mental health, and wellbeing as well as an increase in loneliness and depression.
- Projections indicate elder abuse and neglect will increase significantly in the next 20 years, with the doubling of the population over 65 years.

For Elder Abuse Awareness Week Age Concern is running a campaign 'Elder Abuse, Hits Close to Home'.

