The Sexual Abuse of Vulnerable Adults in Facilities: National Research Findings

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Participating States

New Hampshire APS
Oregon APS
Tennessee APS
Texas APS
Texas Department of Aging & Disability Services
Wisconsin APS/Elder Abuse
Wisconsin Bureau of Quality Assurance
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- All who completed SASUs & were interviewed
Purpose of the Study

- Who are the victims?
- Who are the offenders?
- Where are the cases occurring?
- What factors correlate with sexual abuse in care facilities?
- How often do these cases reach state attention?
- How are they investigated?
- Do professionals have adequate resources to respond?
- What is our response to victims?
- How are perpetrators handled?
- Can we create a protocol for responding to alleged cases?
Methods

- Four-year NIA study
- SASU
  - Web-based data collection system
  - Conventional mail and fax
  - Data collected: All cases reported 5/01–10/31/05
  - File reviews
  - Telephone interviews 15% of investigators
- Minimum Data Set
Total Investigations

- **Victims**
  - 429 Alleged Sexual Abuse Victims
  - 78 Sexual Abuse Victims Confirmed –18%

- **Sexual Perpetrators**
  - 445 alleged perpetrators identified
  - 83 sexual perpetrators confirmed on 74 sub’ed cases (19%)
Time Frames

- Time between abuse and report \((n=151)\)
  - mean = 6 days

- Time between report and investigation \((n=400)\)
  - mean = 8 days

- Time spent investigating \((n=375)\)
  - mean = 15 hours

- Time spent documenting \((n=319)\)
  - mean = 6 hours

- Travel time \((n=221)\)
  - mean = 3 hours
Time from Alleged Abuse to Investigation \((n=155)\)

- Mean = 10.7 days
- Range = 0–147 days
Alleged Victims Demographics \((n=405)\)

- Mean Age = 49.6 years
- Age Range = 18–101 years
- Female = 59%
Alleged Victims’ Care Settings

(n=429)
(Victims may have multiple care settings)
Alleged Victims’ Illnesses and Conditions \((n=365)\)
(Victims may have multiple conditions)
Alleged Victims’ Disabilities ($n=412$)
(Victims may have multiple conditions)
Alleged Victims
ADL Assistance \( (n=413) \)
(Victims may be included in multiple categories)
Substantiated Sexual Abuse Victims’ Demographics \((n=78)\)

- Mean Age = 58.7 years
- Age Range = 18–95 years
- Female = 74%
Substantiated Sexual Abuse Victims’ Care Settings \((n=78)\)

(Victims may have multiple care settings)
Substantiated Sexual Abuse Victims’ Disabilities \( (n=76) \)

\( (Victims \ may \ have \ multiple \ conditions) \)
### Alleged Sexual Abuse \((n=415)\)

*(Cases may have multiple abuses)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Abuse</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anal rape</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital penetration</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure of victim</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molestation</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate interest in victim's genital practices</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral/genital contact</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual jokes/comments</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexualized kissing</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual exploitation</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwelcome description</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaginal rape</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Top 10 Sexual Abuses Substantiated

(n=76)

- Molestation: 43
- Sexualized kissing: 23
- Oral/genital contact: 10
- Sexual joke/comments: 8
- Vaginal rape: 7
- Digital penetration: 6
- Exhibitionism: 4
- Exposure of victim: 4
- Other: 4

Inappropriate interest in victim's...
Location of Substantiated Sexual Abuse \( (n=77) \)}
Factors Leading to Suspicion of Sexual Abuse \( (n=425) \)

(*Cases may have multiple signs & symptoms*)
Alleged Perpetrator \( (n=445) \)

- Mean Age = 42.2 years
- Age Range = 16–96 years
- Male = 74%
Alleged Perpetrator Relationship to Victim ($n=445$)
Confirmed Sexual Abuse Perpetrators

(n = 83)

- Mean Age = 54.6
- Age Range = 16–96
- Male = 87%
Substantiated Perpetrator Relationship to Victim \((n=83)\)
Findings: Victim Disclosures

- Number of disclosures: 182 (but only 78 substantiated)
- What was disclosed:
  - Anal rape: 17
  - Attempted vaginal rape: 1
  - Digital penetration: 13
  - Exhibitionism: 17
  - Exposure of victim: 6
  - Fondling: 96
  - Harmful genital practices: 8
  - Inappropriate interest: 35
  - Oral/genital contact: 22
  - Sadistic sexual activity: 7
  - Sexual jokes/comments: 23
  - Sexualized kissing: 21
  - Sexual exploitation: 2
  - Showing pornography: 6
  - Producing pornography: 1
  - Unwelcome discussion: 15
  - Vaginal rape: 18
  - Vaginal rape w/object: 1
  - Other: 35
  - Unknown: 12
Physical Examinations

- Was alleged victim examined? \((n=421)\)
  - \(Y = 228\)
  - \(N = 161\)

- By whom? \((n=220)\)
  - Facility staff = 166
  - Health care provider not with facility = 48
  - SANE = 24

- Was a rape kit performed? \((n=228)\)
  - \(Y = 40\)
  - \(N = 169\)
  - Unknown = 19
Alleged Victim Intervention Services Offered \((n=402)\)
Outcomes for Alleged Perpetrator \((n=417)\)

- **Staff member \((n=227)\)**
  - Placed on leave = 151
  - Terminated = 24
  - Reassigned = 87
  - Recommend name on registry = 15

- **Resident/Client \((n=88)\)**
  - Increased Supervision=60
  - Transferred = 46

- **Family Member \((n=14)\)**
  - Access terminated = 7
  - Access reduced = 8
  - Contact supervised = 1
Findings \((n = 429)\)

- **Victims**
  - 93 confirmed for all abuse: 22%
  - 78 confirmed as sexual abuse victims 18%

- **445 alleged perpetrators identified**
  - 83 (19%) sexual perps confirmed – 74 cases
  - 101 (24%) perps of all abuse confirmed – 93 cases
Findings Continued

- Sub rates for ALL abuse by relationship of AP
  - Resident 52% (59 of 113)
  - Visitor 50% (4 of 8)
  - Family 27% (3 of 11)
  - Staff 11% (25 of 227)

- Compare to previous research: 46% of APS abuse reports sub’ed nationwide (Teaster et al., 2006)
Elder Sexual Abuse Victims

- Alleged victims age 60+  N = 124
  - 77% women, 22% men
  - Age range 60 - 101, mean = 79
  - 64% had dementia dx
  - 48% required assistance with all ADLs

- Confirmed victims        N = 33
  - 79% women, 18% men
  - Age range 63 - 95, mean = 82
  - 67% had dementia dx
  - 1/2 required assistance with all ADLs
Elder Sexual Abuse Victims

- $N = 124$ alleged, $33$ confirmed $= 27\%$
- $72\%$ alleged assaults in nursing homes
- $10\%$ in ALFs
- Women
  - $96$ alleged, $26$ confirmed $= 27\%$
- Men
  - $27$ alleged, $6$ confirmed $= 22\%$
- Unknown gender
  - $1$ alleged, $1$ confirmed
Sexual Perps of Elder Victims

- N = 119 alleged, 32 sub’ed = 27%

- Male
  - 91 alleged, 28 substantiated = 31%

- Female
  - 25 alleged, 3 substantiated = 12%

- Unknown gender
  - 3 alleged, 1 substantiated = 33%
Alleged Perps – Elder Cases

- N = 119
- 83% of cases – 1 AP
- In some cases multiple APs
- Age range 19 – 96, mean = 56
- 78.4% male
- 6 had criminal hx (including 2 staff)
- 2 previously accused of sexual assault
Sexual Perpetrators of Elders

- Facility staff
  - 51 alleged, 2 confirmed, 4% sub rate
- Residents
  - 48 alleged, 25 confirmed, 52% sub rate
- Family members
  - 5 alleged, 0 confirmed, 0% sub rate
- Visitors
  - 4 alleged, 3 confirmed, 75% sub rate
- Unknown
  - 11 alleged, 2 confirmed, 18% sub rate
Health Care Exams – Elders

- Only 56% of alleged elderly victims examined
- 12% of those not seen until 3+ days after report
- Only 27% seen by HCP not employed in facility
- 27% examined only by facility staff
- Only 4% examined by SANE
Rape Kit Exams – Elders

- Only 10% had rape kit exams
- 6 of 13 kits were positive
- 3 kits negative, 4 unknown
Elderly Victims

- 51/124 disclosed they had been sexually abused
- 33 had cases substantiated
- 6 said they were threatened
- 11 said sexually assaulted multiple times
Elder Disclosures

- Anal rape 5
- Attempted vaginal rape 1
- Digital penetration 4
- Molestation 22
- Oral/genital contact 2
- Sadistic activity 1
- Kissing 6
- Vaginal rape 5
- Shown pornography 2
- Unwanted sexual jokes, talk 8
Criminal Justice Outcomes

- 5 arrests occurred out of all 429 cases
- 0 arrests in elder sexual assault cases despite 32 confirmed elder sexual offenders
More women are victims than men, but men ARE victims
Female perps also found
Time frames too great for proper examination and investigation
Many victim disclosures, even among those with cognitive impairment
Many who disclosed not believed
AP most often facility staff, but confirmed perps most often residents
Very low rate of arrest
Most frequent intervention “none”
Research Reveals

- High need for professional training
- Need quick & effective response to markers
- Need interdisciplinary collaboration
- Need thorough investigation, forensic procedures, intervention
- Need to apply correct evidence standard
- Need to protect all possible victims
- Need increased criminal justice involvement
- Need intervention for suspected sexual abuse
For more info:


Also:
