

Reports on Activities in Several European Countries During 2009

**Compiled by Prof. Ariela Lowenstein
INPEA European Regional Rep.**

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Report from Israel

Combating elder abuse and neglect on the national level in Israel:

- Establishing specialized units within welfare departments in close to 20 local municipalities. The team in these units is composed of social workers, para-professionals and an advisory multi disciplinary team. The team works to raise awareness in the community, to educate professionals, and activates different interventions strategies for example, to empower older abuse women. Rates of identified abuse increased considerably and improvement in quality of life of abuse and neglected elderly is higher.
- Implementing protocols issued by the General Director, Health Ministry, for identification and reporting of elder abuse and neglect within the health system – community clinics and hospitals. In each hospital a violence committee was established which coordinates all the work regarding reports of interventions and further referrals, when needed.
- The Ministry of Welfare issued special regulations to detect and intervene regarding abuse in residential settings. The Ministry also established a national forum for coordination.

- Training programs for professionals, nationally and locally
- WEAAD - an annual conference to mark this day

Sara Alon (Ph.D)
Elder Abuse- Program Director
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Report from Germany

For Germany, a 3-year government programme “Secure life in old age” (2008-2011), focussing upon specific problem areas where preventive action is deemed necessary, coordinated by Prof. Thomas.Goergen:

- Abuse and neglect of older care recipients in family settings (strengthening the preventive potential of in-home nursing services)
- Intimate partner violence in old age (making domestic violence services and other relevant institutions elder-ready)
- Property offences specifically targeted at old people (providing information on frauds, scams, financial exploitation of seniors; training bank employees to better detect and handle cases of financial abuse)
- Homicide in old age (sensitizing physicians regarding risk of non-detection of non-natural deaths among very old care dependent people).

Prof. Thomas.Goergen:
German Police University, Muenster, Germany
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Report from Portugal

- a) The creation of a **free counseling service** to older adults that are feeling victimized in any way, mistreated and neglected. The service was established by Prof. José Ferreira-alves and other colleagues from University of Coimbra, Margarida Lima, and several students. This service is offered in four points of Portugal.
- b) A program of training (that goes in English) promoted and planned for all territory to health professionals, physicians, nurses, psychologists, social assistants that are working in unities for continuing care.
- c) The celebration in Portugal of the WEAAD that can be viewed in our web site, that combines people working in health settings, university settings, political and social settings and media. "Elder abuse will be the scenario I can expect to my old age? Portuguese efforts to construct new stories for old age"

José Ferreira-alves, Ph.D, Assistant Professor
Programa in adult development and aging
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Info from Norway:

1. Elder protective services are established in 3 communities in Norway. At these centers elderly who have experienced abuse are offered assistance by professionals.
2. A National helpline for elderly people exposed to violence opened in December 2008.
3. Abuse of elderly people has been more recognized as a problem. Protective centers, helpline and research have contributed to increased focus on the problem among professionals, politicians and in the media. But still we have many steps left to reach solutions on the problem.

Kind Regards,

Prof. Kristin Skjørten

Senior researcher at Norwegian Center for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies, adjunct professor at the Faculty of Law, University of Oslo, Norway
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Report from Italy

- Italy is one of the countries where **waiting lists** represent since longer time a form of almost "institutionalised" abuse of older persons, who are the main victims of a situation that prevents

many of them from receiving timely the health and social care services they need. Since a few years several initiatives have been undertaken to tackle this problem, both at national and regional level, but a recent one which seems particularly effective is the introduction of "single access points" for dependent persons in the Tuscany region. This step, which has improved the integrated management of existing care services, has allowed to reduce by 35% the waiting lists for accessing nursing homes in 2008, with the expectation that they might totally disappear by the end of 2009. The initiative has proved to be helpful also to improve access to home care services and to support families employing migrant care workers to provide care to their dependent members.

- The law n. 6 approved in 2004 established the possibility to nominate a "support tutor" for all persons "who are unable, even temporarily, to take care of themselves". This piece of legislation allows since then to grant protection, in a much quicker and safer way, to the interests of especially dependent older persons, who until just a few years ago had to resort to the much more complicated juridical tools of "incapacity" or "interdiction". After the law has been approved, it took some time to implement it in all geographical areas of the country and for different types of "inability to take care of oneself", but it can be stated that, today, it represents a good tool to protect any citizen who finds him-/herself in this condition, and is widely applied especially in cases of cognitive impairment.

- After the strong **heat wave** which hit Italy in the summer 2003, causing the death of several thousands of older Italians, the Italian and regional governments have been developing a series of initiatives to prevent that this phenomenon - which has been interpreted as a mainly "neglect-driven" one - could happen again. This has allowed the establishment of a coordinated system which is currently operating on the basis of following elements
 - the national governments elaborates, updates and disseminates common guidelines on how to prevent negative effects of heat waves at an individual level (in terms of suggestions concerning nutrition, use of drugs, housing and most appropriate behaviour to be held to prevent and in case of problems) as well as at a local community level;

- the local governments are required to collect and update lists of over 65 year old residents at risk (such as those living alone, very old, recently hospitalised, low-income and drug-dependent, as well as of other possible risk-groups), and to send them to relevant health and social care services organisations;
- Regions and municipalities are in charge of providing appropriate supervision and, in case of need, intervention in order to properly assist the elder population during heat waves. These initiatives concern mainly the information of the population, the activation (or strengthening) of ad hoc call/counselling centres as well as of active monitoring of subjects more at risk, the provision of intensified support in case of health problems, including the home delivery of medicines, shopping etc.

Dr. Giovanni Lamura

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From Finland:

- University of Helsinki/Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education is running a national project for including protection of elderly into the Security Plans of municipalities. Special attention is paid to domestic violence and especially to elderly women because they are more likely to experience domestic violence than elderly men. Women's experiences of violence increased between 1988 (3%) and 2003 (6%). There is no similar trend in men's experiences. The start for this project was Internal

Security Programme 2008-2015 adopted by the Government of Finland.

- The campaign team of Finland organises yearly WEAAD-campaign to raise awareness of and to combat elder abuse. This year the team will have a seminar with the theme "Ethics in Elderly Care". The campaign is noticed by media every year. The Finnish campaign team is a multi-agency team with the representatives from governmental bodies, local authorities and NGO:s.
- it has been recently, 2009, established an association of seniors for advocating seniors' interests in Finland. One of its most important goals at the moment is to set up an appointment for the ombudsman of seniors into the state administration. One of the founder members of the seniors' association is professor Sirkka-Liisa Kivelä.

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Project Manager, MSc (Health Care), RN
Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education
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SPANISH REPORT (2009)

The Centre Reina Sofia (Valencia, Spain) ([\[www.centroreinasofia.es\]](http://www.centroreinasofia.es) [\[www.centroreinasofia.es/english/\]](http://www.centroreinasofia.es/english/)) works to enhance the visibility of elder mistreatment in Spain.

In 2008, the Centre conducted the very first nation-wide research on the ill treatment of elders within the family, whose findings were also published the same year.

In previous years, the Centre had already undertaken leading initiatives in this field. In 2003, it organised the 7th

International Meeting on Biology, Psychology, and Sociology of Violence on the theme of violence against the elderly, which was held in Valencia. The leading international and national experts participated in the event.

Since 2004 the Centre, in cooperation with the Spanish Confederation of Associations of Elderly Persons (CEOMA), has been contributing to the programme 'Desatar al Anciano y al Enfermo de Alzheimer'. This programme promotes the abandonment of belts and other methods of physical constraints in the care of elderly and Alzheimer patients. Within that programme, a research was carried out on the overuse of physical constraints in geriatric centres, coupled with the training in several nursing homes on the use of alternative methods to physical constraints. A guide for family careers was also published that can be accessed free of charge: [http://fundacioniberdrola.org/PDF/guia_para_personas_mayores.pdf]

This year (2009), the Centre is organising the 2nd International Competition on Photography of Violence. In order to contribute to the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, the theme is violence against elderly persons. The prizes shall be awarded at a ceremony where the première of a dancing show on elder abuse shall be performed. This show has been especially created by the Valencian dancer and choreographer, Ms Eva Bartomeu.

Other initiatives on elder abuse are also taking place in Spain, among which, it is worth noting the one undertaken by FATEC (Federation of Elder Persons Associations in Catalonia) together with the Autonomous Government of Catalonia. Within this initiative, a book was launched in April 2009 reporting the results of a research on financial abuse against elder persons. This research was founded by the European programme Daphne II.



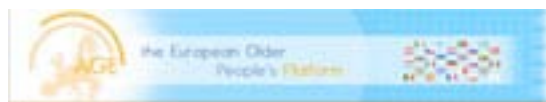
Report from the UK

Review of the 'No Secrets' Government guidance on practice issues undertaken and awaiting conclusions.

New series of research projects commissioned by the Department of Health to look at institutional mistreatment.

New initiatives required on practice innovation and conceptual development.

Prof. Simon Biggs
Director, Institute of Gerontology King's College London.



Report from AGE, Europe

AGE - the European Older People's Platform is a European network of organisations of people aged 50+ and represents over 22 million older people in Europe. AGE aims to voice and promote the interests of the 150 million inhabitants aged 50+ in the European Union and to raise awareness of the issues that concern them most.

Isabel Mota Borges, Policy Officer and Project Manager

AGE- The European Older People's Platform, Brussels Belgium



ALMA France

- * Volunteer help line for abused elder people and disabled people :
78 over 100 counties covered in France
- * Prevention actions on the topic of elder abuse and abuse against
disabled people
- Training sessions among professionals of the social and medical
sector

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