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Introducing: AAR's Local Abuse Stories Database

In 2002, a conversation took place on the national elder abuse listserv about the nonexistence -- but potential usefulness -- of a database of local news stories on elder abuse. Several people discussed how they would use such a database, but no one stepped forward to sponsor it.

When the Internet search engine *Google!* later launched a service that specifically searched more than 4500 newspapers (www.news.google.com), *Adult Abuse Review* staff decided it had just become feasible for us to step in to fill the need (expanding it, of course, to cover vulnerable adults as well). We are delighted to announce the results are now available to all, at www.WordBridges.net/elderabuse/media/.

Ideally, this database would allow instantaneous searching and downloading of each and every article. That is not possible; copyright laws make such a database either illegal or extremely expensive. The next best choice -- links to specific articles -- is problematic because many newspapers only maintain a web-based archive of articles for a few months or even a few days, which would result in the database containing mostly "dead" links. Therefore, we have linked only to the home page of the newspaper from which an article came. From that home page you should be able to search the online archive (if they maintain one) and/or get information on how to reach the newspaper's editorial office to obtain a copy of the article(s) you want. You can also obtain copies of local newspapers' articles from your local library.

We also cannot, at this point, manifest our dream of giving you multiple ways to search and display the results of the database. That is coming. In the meantime, users can search the database by state. The results are then displayed alphabetically by locale and, within locale, with the newest article on top.

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Adult Abuse Review is a free, monthly, online newsletter for the wide variety of professionals and community members involved in preventing and intervening in adult abuse. AAR tells you exactly what you need to know about new publications, research, services, policy efforts, websites, and more.

Readers are encouraged to photocopy and distribute copies to those who may be interested.

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Victim or Perpetrator: Who Decides?

I'm one of those people who have few boundaries; for me there's no line between work and family: they both blend into the whole that is my life-and-work. What I do for work affects how I live my life, and what happens in my life affects my thinking about work.

This month the crossovers were constant.

As part of their sustained, now year-plus campaign of terror against my family, white supremacists have now perpetrated two gang rapes and mutilations of my (male) partner in his home. After the first one, in February, my partner drove himself to the local emergency room that was associated with a well-regarded Sexual Assault Treatment Center (SATC). I met him there, and we began a 9-hour odyssey that even he felt was more traumatic than the initial hate crime we were there to treat.

Among other insults we were subjected to, the two female police officers from "sensitive crimes" (i.e., those whose job regularly involves responding to sexual assaults) interviewing my partner made several anti-male comments within his earshot, at one point saying to him, "You have to cut us some slack. We're not used to dealing with male victims." More than once, emergency room staff referred to him as the *perpetrator*, even though he was sitting there with bleeding epithets carved into his arms and legs, and with a visible ring around his neck where the attackers had strangled him with a rope. When the police officers wanted him to remove his clothes to photograph the carvings and he asked to have me present -- I was being interrogated by another police officer down the hall -- they decided they wouldn't wait to retrieve me and began physically pulling his clothes off against his will.

Eventually, even though my partner has disabilities that make it physically impossible for him to have made some of the cuttings, they decided that no assault had taken place: he had self-mutilated, they declared, and made up the rape.

With the police's refusal to take our case, we joined the 30-40% of people who come to that sexual assault treatment center who the police determine on the spot to have "unfounded" cases. Although it

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Two New, Innovative Services Announced

Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Shelter for Both Genders Breaks New Ground

In what is possibly a national first, the Sexual Assault Crisis Team (SACT) of Washington County in Vermont in October, 2002, opened a shelter for male and female sexual abuse and domestic violence victims. Bobbi Gagne, SACT's Executive Director, was quoted in the *New York Times* as saying, "we're trying to create a safe space where survivors can have control over their environment and are treated with respect and dignity." The shelter can house up to five victims and one or two friends or family members, and is staffed by Keith Goslant, who is also president of SACT's board of directors, and other volunteers.

Out in the Mountains reported that the shelter is set up with two separate living areas, "so that if there are both male and female residents, they need not cross paths." Male sexual assault victims access the shelter the same way women victims do, by calling the program's hotline (802/223-7755). *Out in the Mountains* reports, "Male victims of domestic violence, however, need to be referred through another agency -- such as SafeSpace or another domestic violence group -- to ensure that the person seeking help is not an abuser in search of a sheltered partner." About 25 people have used the shelter so far, roughly half of them men.

Although SATC receives funding for all its various services to female victims, "the group is providing services to male victims with an all-volunteer staff because no one will fund them," *Out in the Mountains* reported. The Crisis Team is staffed by only five to seven "advocate-volunteers."

Shelter residents must be adult, nonsuicidal, free

of mental health or medical concerns that need constant monitoring, and not have sexually offended. Average stays are usually no more than three days, but "can be extended." It was not clear from the articles if the shelter is wheelchair accessible.

Services are also offered in the victim's home: "The three employees of the team and volunteers can visit a woman's house and remove the bed where she was assaulted or place posters in a man's bedroom, to change the atmosphere."

Two other unusual features of the shelter are that it also serves past victims of childhood sexual abuse, and its location is public. One 36-year-old client the *Times* interviewed had been sexually and physically abused by his mother from ages 6 to 12 and had engaged repeatedly in treatment. "Working with Ms. Gagne...has helped him discover a person who is not defined by his childhood," the *Times* reported. About the open location, *Out in the Mountains* said, SATC decided "instead [of secrecy] to cultivate positive and watchful relationships with neighbors, the police, and local mental health agencies."

Elder Abuse Forensic Center Opens

In another national first, Santa Ana (California) in May, 2003, opened an Elder Abuse Forensic Center that provides meeting space for ten Orange County agencies to collaborate on elder and dependent adult abuse.

The center is funded by a three-year, \$850,000

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Is There Anti-Male Bias in Domestic Violence Services?

"Yes!" That was the resounding response to two May, 2003, articles in the *Cecil Whig*, a Cecil County, Maryland newspaper, that were widely reposted on the Internet.

The paper was covering a controversy that erupted when the County's Domestic Violence/Rape Crisis Center (DVRCC) staff walked out of a May 12th Cecil County Family Violence Coordinating Council in protest of its showing a "skewered, sensationalist" *20/20* news magazine segment on women who assault male partners. DVRCC staff reportedly also said that given the statistics of how few men come to them for services, they were concerned the Council had spent too much time in the past year talking about male victims, to the detriment of other underserved victims such as elderly victims, those with disabilities, and those with limited proficiency in English.

The controversy got additional mileage the next week, when the Second Judicial Court discussed whether the walkout precluded the judges, at least one of whom was present at the Council meeting, from associating with DVRCC, since state law precludes judges from associating with people and agencies suspected of gender bias. The judges apparently did not reach a conclusion.

Partly as a result of the articles being reposted on several men's rights websites, the paper received (and published) at least 35 comments on the controversy. Nearly every posting argued that the DVRCC's action was in keeping with domestic violence agencies' attitudes nationwide, which, the critics charge, routinely ignore statistics showing that there are two male domestic violence victims for every three female victims.

Predictably, some of the comments were vitriolic.

Many, however, told personal stories of male victims of domestic violence being unable to find assistance, and argued that many domestic violence surveys, studies, and even programs are structured and presented in ways that highlight violence against women while playing down violence against men.

Although DVRCC staff had argued that only 14 men compared to 300 women requested services from them last year, one poster noted that the DVRCC website itself says, "We do not accept males over the age of 14," which, in his opinion, "boldly state(s), do not come here for help, if you are male and over the age of 14." Several pointed out that for many years, domestic violence against women was not taken seriously, just as the DVRCC was now dismissing the scope of violence against men.

At least five men talked about their abuse at the hands of women (one of which said it was mutual); two of these men reported being disbelieved, scorned, male-bashed, and even prosecuted as a result of reporting the abuse. Other men claimed the entire social services system is biased against men and fathers; one said his petition to get his non-custodial ex-wife to pay ordered child support came back three times "changed by the receiving county to show me as the parent in arrears."

The director of a national hotline for battered men said his clients report "many, many men throughout the country are getting hung up on by domestic violence advocates who work at these established projects. If they are not hung up on they are called abusers and given the number to the nearest batterers

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Local Stories Database
January - March, 2003

CALIFORNIA

Barstow 2/1/2003

Title: Interim home head investigated for abuse; Suspicious death in December also under review
Categories:
> Elder Abuse
> Nursing Home

Source: Desert Dispatch
[www.desertdispatch.com]

Author: Tammy J. McCoy
[tammy_mccoy@link.freedom.com]

Carlsbad 2/1/2003

Title: Man arrested in assault case
Categories:
> Elder Abuse
> Prosecution

Comments: *Assailant of two older beach-walkers charged with elder abuse.*

Source: Sign on San Diego
[www.signonsandiego.com]

Barstow 3/29/2003

Title: Home receives new citation for second death; Announcement comes day after state official says nursing unit to close.
Categories:
> Elder Abuse
> Nursing Home

Source: Desert Dispatch
[www.desertdispatch.com]

Author: Tammy J. McCoy
[tammy_mccoy@link.freedom.com]

Chico 3/25/2003

Title: Nursing home sued over patient's death
Categories:
> Elder Abuse
> Nursing Home
> Prosecution

Comments: *Resident allegedly died of dehydration, malnutrition and asphyxiation.*

Source: Chico Enterprise Record [www.chicoer.com]

Author: Terry Vau Dell

Barstow 3/28/2003

Title: Nursing wing at Vets Home to close
Categories:
> Elder Abuse
> Nursing Home

Comments: *Multiple elder abuse charges contribute to facility's decision to close.*

Source: Desert Dispatch

Author: Tammy J. McCoy
[tammy_mccoy@link.freedom.com]

Concord 3/28/2003

Title: Suit filed over pain treatment of ill man
Categories:
> Elder Abuse
> Nursing Home
> Prosecution

Comments: *Both physician and nursing home charged with elder abuse.*

Source: Contra Costa Times
[www.bayarea.com]

Author: Sandy Kieffman

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What the Database Tells Us

Although the database wasn't set up as part of a media research process, it's impossible to read and summarize more than 200 articles without gathering some impressions. Here are some of ours.

- Elder abuse is not invisible to the public. Although the topic is not well covered (and we found *no* articles in the first five months of 2003 in 10 states), there are a surprising number of articles on abuse, with both domestic and institutional elder abuse getting coverage.
- Vulnerable adult abuse -- in institutions, by caregivers, and even by family members -- is likewise receiving a fair amount of attention.
- Self-neglect is, on the other hand, rarely talked about (despite the fact it makes up the majority of Adult Protective Services cases in states whose mandate includes it). When it is covered, there is frequently some recognition of adults' rights to self-determination to counteract observers' reported distress over the situation.
- As might be expected, the media is more likely to cover cases that involve a police action or the issuance of a government report. It's not uncommon for an institution, once it's been charged with abuse, to hit a reporter's radar screen again, and some papers do seem to take care to follow-up on domestic cases as they move through the criminal justice system.
- Although some articles do mention the services that can be provided to elder and vulnerable adult abuse victims, they very seldom give much detail about what such services do. Two partial exceptions are the April 15, 2003 "Adult Protective Services unit fights neglect, abuse, exploitation" article run by the *Okmulgee Daily Times* (www.okmulgeetimes.com) and the April 27, 2003 article, "Social services sensitive to elder abuse," published by the *Wausau [Wisconsin] Daily Herald* (www.wausaudailyherald.com). Phone numbers of agencies victims can call are more likely to show up in articles on younger domestic violence victims than in articles on elder abuse.
- Sexual assault of *male* nursing home residents showed up a surprising number of times during the five months the initial database covers. Whether this trend continues and what it might mean -- do they merit more attention because they aren't what the public expects? Are these rapes more likely to be reported than are rapes of female residents? Have previously-reported studies of male sexual assault underestimated its prevalence? -- remains to be seen.
- Overall, reporters are not doing a bad job of presenting elder and vulnerable adult abuse issues. While the initial database was being prepared, the National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA) published a new document on its website that gives advice to journalists about misconceptions they should avoid when covering elder abuse (www.elderabusecenter.org/default.cfm?p=pitfalls.cfm). These myths are listed as:
 1. Abuse of older adults generally occurs on dark streets by unknown perpetrators.

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Creative Database Use

There is a saying that not everything that *can* be done, *should* be. To make sure we were properly investing AAR's efforts on behalf of the elder/vulnerable adult abuse field, we challenged ourselves to expand on a national elder abuse listserv discussion of how a database of publicly accessible information on elder/vulnerable adult abuse might be used.

- **Demonstrating the need for legislation and/or funding.** Those who talk about elder or vulnerable adult abuse to federal, state, and local legislators report they frequently hear such officials claim that such cases don't happen in *their* jurisdiction. Offering such legislators the number of cases reported among their constituents is helpful, but giving them the details of one or more such cases that people in their district are discussing over breakfast really helps break down denial. In a few areas -- take the state of California as one example -- so many articles are listed that the database entries *alone* may be helpful in convincing an official that the problem needs more attention.
- Identifying public education opportunities. Letters to the editor are one of the most-read features of newspapers; writing a letter of praise or clarification after an article on abuse appears in a local paper is therefore an effective, low-cost public education strategy. Article publication can also provide a good entree to having a meeting with the publication's editorial board to give them more information on elder and/or vulnerable adult abuse, community resources, issues in the field, and story ideas. If a meeting isn't feasible, perhaps a

mailed packet of information is.

- Developing reporter relationships. Once a reporter has written one article on a topic, he or she is often very open to writing other articles on that topic. As the database documents, in some cases it's clear that reporters have *already* made elder/vulnerable adult abuse cases a regular part of their "beat." Even if a reporter has only covered elder/vulnerable adult abuse once, it may be very worthwhile to contact her or him to introduce yourself, offer to serve as a "source" for future articles and, perhaps, ask if he or she would like to be added to your mailing list for annual reports and the like. Don't be afraid to also send them story ideas; unless you make a pest of yourself, the worst that will happen is that they won't pursue your idea.
- **Keeping tabs on local developments.** As we all know, elder/vulnerable adult abuse cases get reported to -- or show up in -- a wide variety of places. It's entirely possible that a case making the news is news to you. If so, you may want to contact someone to offer services, to invite them to attend your multidisciplinary team or coalition, or to offer them training.
- **Monitoring public perception of your agency.** People develop expectations of an agency based on their previous contacts with that agency or -- if they have had no contacts -- from what they've heard about the agency. One of the places they may "hear" things is the media.

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Elder Abuse By Strangers and Others

One trend that the creation of the local stories database revealed is making “elder abuse” a charge in cases where a stranger to the victim committed an assault.

Although not confined to California, the pattern seems strongest there.

- In Oceanside, California, in January, the man who led teenagers in home-invasion robberies in which two elderly men were bound hand and foot was charged with elder abuse, among other things (“Robbery ringleader suspect to stand trial,” January 3, 2003, www.signonsandiego.com).
- In Carlsbad, California, in February, a man who assaulted elder beach-walkers on two different occasions was charged with elder abuse (“Man arrested in assault case,” February 1, 2003, www.signonsandiego.com).
- In Milpitas, California, in February, elder abuse was among the charges leveled at a man who broke into an older woman’s home and stabbed her (“Milpitas woman stabbed during home break-in,” February 27, 2003, *The Mercury News*, www.bayarea.com).
- In Benton, Missouri, in May, a man who broke into an older woman’s house to rape and rob her was also charged with elder abuse (“Hearing delayed for man charged in rape, robbery,” May 15, 2003, *Standard Democrat*, <http://news.mywebpal.com>).

California is also where a plumbing business that had overcharged a great many of its customers was charged with elder abuse, and where an elder

abuse charge was added against a man who pretended to be an insurance salesperson and sold fake insurance policies (“San Joaquin DA Files Suit Against Plumbing Business,” January 7, 2003, www.theKCRACchannel.com; “Norco man gets 4 years for insurance swindle,” May 23, 2003, *The Press-Enterprise*, www.pe.com). In yet a third California case, a realtor who sold an older woman’s home for far below its market value was also charged with elder abuse (“Realtor gets community support, restraining order.” February 15, 2003, *Napa News*, www.napanews.com).

Elder abuse has also turned up in a second California lawsuit alleging that undertreatment of pain by a physician (and, in this case, a nursing home) constitutes elder abuse (“Suit filed over pain treatment of ill man,” March 28, 2003, *Contra Costa Times*, www.bayarea.com). (For information on the first California suit, which the family won, see <http://www.wordbridges.net/elderabuse/interventions/2001-07-01.html/>.)

This extension of the crime of “elder abuse” to cases in which the victim and perpetrator did not have a previous relationship is in direct opposition to the recently-released report by the National Research Council, *Elder Mistreatment: Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation in an Aging America* (National Academy of Sciences, 2003). That body -- seeking to develop a definition upon which all future research might be conducted -- defined elder abuse as “intentional actions that cause harm or create a serious risk of harm (whether or not harm was intended) to a vulnerable elder *by a caregiver or other person who stands in a trust relationship to the elder* or failure by a caregiver to satisfy the elder’s basic needs or to protect the elder from harm.” (p. 1,

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... Introducing: AAR's Local Abuse Stories Database

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At this point, the database contains more than 200 articles published beginning January 1, 2003 (plus one stellar December 2002 article on the rarely-covered topic of self-neglect), from 40 states. It will be updated on the website at least weekly. Each article is assigned to one or more categories in preparation for our future, more sophisticated, searching function, and to facilitate the user's selection process. Many of the article entries also contain an AAR-prepared short summary of the article's key points. The categories we have used are:

- **Elder abuse:** Article addresses one or more cases of elder abuse, neglect, exploitation, or abandonment of an elder (however those terms are defined by state law and/or the journalist) living in any setting.
- **Vulnerable adult abuse:** Article addresses one or more cases of abuse of a vulnerable adult under the age of 60 living in any setting. (Note that in states where someone is defined as "elder" at age 65, an article about the rape of a 63-year-old developmentally delayed person might therefore be categorized under elder abuse.)
- **Self-neglect:** Although self-neglect cases make up the majority of the adult protective services caseload in states that investigate this type of abuse, articles about self-neglect have proven to be surprisingly rare. We therefore created a separate category to facilitate finding these articles in the database.
- **Nursing homes:** Because a particular interest of many people is abuse and neglect in nursing home settings, articles that directly or indirectly address abuse there are so marked.
- **Institutions (not nursing homes):** Many vulnerable adults and elders reside in facilities such as foster homes, residential centers, and other staffed institutional settings that are not nursing homes. Because abuse in such settings is often handled differently than abuse occurring in a private home or a nursing home, such articles are separately categorized.
- **Prosecution:** This category is marked whenever a case had gone -- or was in the process of going -- through the courts. Both civil and criminal cases are included.
- **Services:** Articles that are devoted to some service or program designed to prevent or address vulnerable adult and/or elder abuse (or that incidentally contain significant descriptions of how such services work) receive this categorization.
- **Legislation:** Not all articles about pending elder abuse legislation are included in the database. Those that report on a just-enacted law and/or that contain a description of one or more specific elder or vulnerable adult abuse cases are.

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Prosecution Controversies: Scratch or Sexual Harassment?

A California jury acquitted an 81-year-old man of lewd conduct in May after a six-day trial in which he was charged with provocatively rubbing his genitals in a sexual advance to another resident sitting in the dining room where he was visiting his wife.

The man, who regularly spends 10 hours a day at the nursing home, claimed he was scratching a surgical scar. During the trial witnesses said the man had on at least five previous occasions kissed, held the hand of, touched the breast of, and exposed himself to the other resident, who has multiple sclerosis and a "diminished mental capacity" and whom the man claims is a friend of his and his wife's. The man's attorney claimed the prosecution was overdone. "The AG's office assigned three investigators to this case. They filed 21 reports. They put two prosecutors on it. I've seen murder cases that didn't take up these kinds of resources," the *Sacramento Bee* reported him saying.

The Bureau of Medi-Cal Fraud and Elder Abuse brought the case. The man does not intend to move his wife to another facility.

RELATED LINKS:

"Jury Acquits Octogenarian Accused of Lewdness in Nursing Home," April 24, 2003, *Metropolitan News-Enterprise*, www.metnews.com

"Man, 81, innocent of lewd conduct; A visit to his wife in a nursing home leads to criminal charges," May 6, 2003, *The Sacramento Bee*, www.sacbee.com

... Victim or Perpetrator: Who Decides?

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is perversely comforting to know we have a lot of company in being labeled liars by police, as a professional in a field that deals with physical and sexual assault, I have to wonder: given the police's decision, would our case be reflected in statistics about rape? Is the number of abuse and assault cases reported by victims actually far higher than the statistics show because police refuse to take so many cases? What are the demographics of the victims who are believed and those who are not? Would analyses of these "made-up" cases reveal a gender bias (among, most likely, other biases)?

Luckily, the SATC staff who finally got to examine and treat us hours after we had arrived at the hospital were wonderful. They have been unfailingly supportive of us since, going out of their way to provide ongoing support. Yet even here, the victim being male is problematic. One night my partner decided he needed additional support, and called the SATC's after-hours line to talk to a counselor. After he explained to the woman answering the phone that he'd

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Entries also include, where available, the article's author and his or her email address.

To help you make the most of this database, we've added to the list of ideas generated in the 2002 national elder abuse listserv discussion and enumerated them all in the accompanying article, "Creative Database Use." Please let us know if you have other ideas or suggestions for how we can improve the usefulness of this service.

... *Victim or Perpetrator: Who Decides?*

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been raped and wanted some referrals she said, "I'm sorry, I don't understand. Whom did you assault?" He hung up on her.

This week my counseling session was moved out of its usual setting in the SATC's examination center to their offices, which are in a suite that is conspicuously labeled, "Women's Health Department." How welcome and understood, I wondered, would a male rape survivor feel if he went there for counseling? Would he worry that he wouldn't be believed or supported if he said his rapist had been female?

I'd like to say that our experience after the second gang rape in May was better, but it was not. Then, too, the police seemed unable to accept that a man had been sexually assaulted. Despite my being there, explaining the campaign of terrorism against us, and begging them, and despite the fact they had to step over blood and fecal matter all over the entryway in which my partner had been assaulted, one police officer kept his gun trained on him and kept demanding, "Did you do this to yourself?" My partner's response to having a gun aimed at his chest and being accused of assaulting himself after just being gang raped in his home for the second time in three months was to scream at them to get out of his house. That, in turn, resulted in the police quickly leaving, saying we were being "uncooperative" and that they therefore would not investigate further.

I presume rape number two went officially uncounted, as well.

So when the controversy erupted over a

domestic violence program saying that, given the statistics, too much time was being spent on male victims, I had to wonder. We *tried* to report our crimes, and failed. How often does that happen? When male domestic violence survivors reported they had been re-victimized by domestic violence advocates who insisted that because they were male they must be the perpetrator, not the victim, of abuse, I had to nod my head and say, "Yes. We've experienced that." And when I read an article in the press about male nursing home residents being sexually assaulted, I had to wonder, "What kind of response did *they* get from those who are supposed to help them?"

Our field's current emphasis on developing a coordinated response to elder and vulnerable adult abuse involving adult protective services, law enforcement, domestic violence programs, sexual assault centers, ombudsmen, and the like is absolutely critical. We *must* do this to ensure that victims get the kind of support and assistance and choices they need. But, as my personal experience as well as some of the articles in this *AAR* show, there appear to be biases in these systems that may be re-traumatizing victims -- especially victims that don't fit what we think of as the "normal" victim profile -- far more than they're helping them.

We owe it to those victims to do an honest assessment of ourselves and the systems we interact with: to what extent have these systems been built on assumptions that grew from -- and therefore result in continuing -- the silencing and erasure of some victims?

~ Loree Cook-Daniels

INTERVENTIONS

... *Two New, Innovative Services Announced*

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grant from the Archstone Foundation. The county is also devoting \$50,000 per year to the project. Dr. Laura Mosqueda, an associate professor at University of California -- Irvine's College of Medicine and director of geriatrics at the university's medical center, and Dr. Kerry Burnight, also from UC Irvine, will manage the center, which is housed in the same building at the county's Adult Protective Services.

Representatives of the ten agencies involved (which include the District Attorney's office, the Sheriff's Department, the Chapman University School of Law, and the non-profit Human Options) will meet Tuesday and Thursday mornings to discuss cases. Already one case that came to the center's attention during its formation has borne fruit: the week before the center was opened, as a result of a rumor that had reached the center staff during an organizational meeting, a bus driver was arrested on suspicion of assaulting two disabled women he transported.

RELATED LINKS:

"Vermont Shelter for Sex Abuse Victims Welcomes Women and Men," May 29, 2003, *New York Times*. www.nytimes.com (Note that the NYT's archive is offered on a pay-per-article basis.)

"Barre Sexual and Domestic Violence Shelter Admits Men," February 2, 2003, *Out in the Mountains*. www.mountainpridemedia.org/oitm/issues/2003/02feb2003/news02_barre.htm

"Center to Look Out for Elders: O.C. investigators and prosecutors targeting senior abuse will soon have a home base. Officials hope it'll lead to the creation of others," May 11, 2003, *Los Angeles Times*, www.latimes.com (Note that the LAT's archive is offered on a pay-per-article basis.)

"Joining forces to stop and to punish abuse of the elderly: Lawyers, doctors, social workers and police now have a place to meet and collaborate," May 13, 2003, *Orange County Register*, www2.ocregister.com

Federally-Funded Elder Abuse Projects

This edition of *AAR* was originally scheduled to be on federally-funded elder abuse projects. We switched around topics in order to give the Administration on Aging more time to respond to our questions about its grant making process; we will therefore be addressing federal projects in the April and May 2003 editions.

... Is There Anti-Male Bias in Domestic Violence Services?

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intervention program." His program found that of over 2000 domestic violence programs in the US, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, only seven will shelter men (see article elsewhere in this AAR, "Two New, Innovative Services Announced"). Another poster commented on the names of domestic violence services, asking rhetorically if a woman would seek help at the House of Bubba or the Men's Law Center, referring to two Maryland agencies (the House of Ruth and the Women's Law Center) to which DVRCC refers domestic violence survivors.

Several of the postings made reference to resources and publications that may be useful to those working with male elder and vulnerable adult abuse victims. These include:

- National battered men's helpline (1-877-643-1120 Access Code 0757 or email help@batteredmenshelpline.org): www.batteredmenshelpline.org
- Domestic violence against men project of Charity ManKind: www.mankind.org.uk
- National abused men and boys resource list: <http://themenscenter.com/National/national01.htm>
- "Data Resources Program of the National Institute of Justice" report: www.icpsr.umich.edu/NACJD/PDF/nij-win2001.pdf
- "References Examining Assaults By Women on Their Spouses or Male Partners: An Annotated Bibliography" (covering 111 empirical studies and 27 reviews and/or analyses of domestic violence): www.csulb.edu/~mfiebert/assault.htm

RELATED LINKS >>

Prosecution Controversies: Can Victims Violate Their Own Protective Orders?

That's the question being raised around the country as the result of an Ohio case in which a battered woman was charged with violating the protective order she held against her ex-husband. The case arose when the woman invited the ex-husband to attend one of their children's birthday parties, at which both drank and began what her lawyer called "a mutual combat situation...[which] resulted in [the woman] kicking his butt." The woman received 90 days in jail for the assault, plus 90 days for violation of the protective order. The man was also prosecuted -- solely for violating the protective order -- and fined \$100.

The case, which is currently on appeal before the Ohio Supreme Court, was reported on in a June 3, 2003 *Associated Press* report that was widely reprinted throughout the country.

RELATED LINKS:

"Ohio Case Considers Whether Abuse Victim Can Violate Own Protective Order," May 30, 2003, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com [note that articles in the NYT archive are available for a fee]

"Court to Decide Protective Order Case," June 3, 2003, *Associated Press*, www.ap.org

- ◆ "Protest raises questions of gender bias; Domestic violence staff walks out on video showing abuse of men," May 15, 2003, *Cecil Whig*, www.zwire.com
- ◆ "Gender bias concerns go before judges; Issue raised after protest by crisis staff," May 21, 2003, *Cecil Whig*, www.zwire.com
- ◆ For comments on the articles, find the Cecil Whig website through [zwire](http://www.zwire.com), then click "HOT TOPICS!" under News in the lefthand column.

Media

... Local Stories Database

Cupertino 3/20/2003

Title: Man held for defrauding senior citizen out of \$10,000 and a Cadillac
Categories: > Elder Abuse
> Prosecution

Comments: Charges include elder fraud.

Source: Los Altos Town Crier [www.losaltosonline.com]

Glendale 3/10/2003

Title: Caretakers Accused of Abusing Mental Patients
Categories: > Vulnerable Adult Abuse

Source: ABC 7 [www.abc7.com]
> Institutions (not nursing home)
> Prosecution

Los Angeles 2/3/2003

Title: Team 4 Reports: Nursing Home Investigation: Are Your Loved Ones Safe?
Categories: > Elder Abuse
> Nursing Home

Source: NBC 4 [www.nbc4.tv]

Milpitas 2/7/2003

Title: Milpitas woman stabbed during home break-in
Categories: > Elder Abuse
> Prosecution

Comments: Charges include elder abuse.

Source: The Mercury News [www.bayarea.com]

Mt. Baldy 3/27/2003

Title: Confession reported in Baldy killing
Categories: > Elder Abuse
> Prosecution
Comments: Charges include elder abuse.

Source: Daily Bulletin [www.dailybulletin.com]

Author: Jason Newell [jason.newell@dailybulletin.com]

Napa 2/6/2003

Title: Police detail elder abuse, imprisonment
Categories: > Elder Abuse
> Prosecution

Comments: Victim met alleged perpetrator's parents while they were living in their car in local shopping center.

Source: Napa Valley Register [www.napanews.com]

Author: Marsha Dorgan [mdorgan@napanews.com]

Oakland 1/6/2003

Title: Judge Julie ready to rule for senior citizens; Julie Con-ger's court is one of many nationwide that seek to make the legal process easier for the elderly to navigate
Categories: > Elder Abuse
> Prosecution
> Services

Comments: Includes Alameda County data.

Source: Contra Costa Times [www.bayarea.com]

Author: Brian Anderson [banderson2@cctimes.com]

(continued on page 15)

... Local Stories Database

Palmdale 1/2/2003

Title: Couple charged in elder abuse
Categories: > Elder Abuse

Comments: Attorney and wife charged with grand theft against 91-year-old neighbor.

Source: Los Angeles Daily News [www.dailynews.com]

Author: Greg Botonia

Red Bluff 1/10/2003

Title: Two arrested for elder abuse
Categories: > Elder Abuse

Comments: \$50,000 taken from 82-year-old relative.

Source: Record Searchlight [www.redding.com]

Sacramento 12/24/2002

Title: Trapped in squalor, seniors getting help; A series of recent rescues in dilapidated houses stuns city authorities
Categories: > Self-Neglect

Comments: In one case, woman was living on her own porch.

Source: Sacramento Bee [www.sacbee.com]

Author: Jay Mather

San Diego 1/3/2003

Title: Robbery ringleader suspect to stand trial
Categories: > Elder Abuse
 > Prosecution

Comments: Both victims elders, so robbers also charged with elder abuse.

Source: Sign On San Diego [www.signonsandiego.com]

Author: Onell R. Soto [onell.soto@uniontrib.com]

San Francisco 2/12/2003

Title: S.F. officials target elder abuse cases; monitoring, prosecution part of program
Categories: > Elder Abuse
 > Services

Comments: Officials announce initiatives to counter risk caused by cuts in health and social service programs.

Source: San Francisco Chronicle [www.sfgate.com]

Author: Rachel Gordon [rgordon@sfnchronicle.com]

San Francisco 3/30/2003

Title: S.F. killer admits to 4 more slayings;
Categories: > Elder Abuse
 > Prosecution

Comments: Most of the murders of elders had been ruled death by natural causes.

Source: San Francisco Chronicle [www.sfgate.com]

Author: Jaxon Van Derbeken [jvanderbeken@sfnchronicle.com]

(continued on page 16)

... Local Stories Database

St. Helena 2/15/2003

Title: Realtor gets community support, restraining order
Categories: > Elder Abuse

Comments: Below-market sale of woman's home results in elder abuse charge, among others.

Source: Napa Valley Register [www.napanews.com]

Author: Nathan Crabbe [ncrabbe@napanews.com]

Stockton 1/7/2003

Title: San Joaquin DA Files Suit Against Plumbing Business
Categories: > Elder Abuse
> Prosecution

Comments: Elder abuse among charges levied against business accused of fraud.

Source: KCRA 3 [www.theKCRACHannel.com]

CONNECTICUT

Torrington 1/26/2003

Title: Elder scam man caught; A former Torrington resident has been arrested in Texas on a 27 count arrest warrant arising from the theft of \$1 million from 18 elderly victims in Connecticut
Categories: > Elder Abuse
> Prosecution

Source: Register Citizen [www.registercitizen.com]

DELAWARE

Lewes 2/8/2003

Title: 2nd death investigated at Lewes nursing home; Resident found hanged by wheelchair belt
Categories: > Nursing Home

Source: The News Journal [www.delawareonline.com]

Author: Terri Sanginiti [tsanginiti@delawareonline.com]

FLORIDA

Lakeland 2/9/2003

Title: Arrested for Abuse, 2 Face New Charges
Categories: > Elder Abuse

Comments: Operators of a methamphetamine lab charged with child, elder abuse for storing chemicals near dependents.

Source: The Ledger [www.theledger.com]

Lauderdale Lakes 1/29/2003

Title: Man Accused of Letting Mother Starve To Death; Woman Had Diabetes, Alzheimer's
Categories: > Elder Abuse

Source: Click 10 [www.click10.com]

(continued on page 17)

... Local Stories Database

Navarre 3/14/2003

Title: Family posts bond in neglect case; 3 charged with larceny, exploitation of Shalimar woman
Categories:
 > Elder Abuse
 > Prosecution

Comments: *Victim met family accused of neglecting, exploiting her at an independent living facility.*

Source: Pensacola News Journal [www.pensacolanejournal.com]

Author: Derke Pivnick

Pensacola 2/5/2003

Title: Pensacola pair charged with manslaughter in neglect case
Categories:
 > Elder Abuse
 > Prosecution

Comments: *Victim discussed in January 23, 2003 story dies.*

Source: Herald Tribune [www.heraldtribune.com]

Pensacola 1/23/2003

Title: 2 charged with elderly neglect
Categories:
 > Elder Abuse
 > Prosecution

Comments: *Elder lived with her nephew and his partner.*

Source: Pensacola News Journal [www.pensacolanejournal.com]

Author: Sean Smith

Sanford 3/29/2003

Title: 3 arrested in Seminole on neglect, abuse charges
Categories:
 > Elder Abuse
 > Vulnerable Adult Abuse
 > Institutions (not nursing home)
Comments: *Operator and two employees of an unlicensed assisted-living facility charged.*

Source: Orlando Sentinel [www.orlandosentinel.com]

Author: Gary Taylor [gtaylor@orlandosentinel.com]

GEORGIA

Columbus 1/25/2003

Title: Son accused of abusing mom; Police find 92-year-old locked in cold house with only rotten food
Categories:
 > Elder Abuse

Source: Ledger Enquirer [www.ledger-enquirer.com]

Author: Muriel Tan [mtan@ledger-enquirer.com]

ILLINOIS

Belleville 3/11/2003

Title: Nursing home is rife with abuse, state says
Categories:
 > Elder Abuse
 > Nursing Home

Comments: *Rampant physical and sexual abuse among residents alleged.*

Source: St. Louis Today [www.stltoday.com]

Author: William Lamb [wlamb@post-dispatch.com]

(continued on page 18)

... Local Stories Database

INDIANA

Hammond	1/13/2003
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Title: Elder abuse rises as America grays
Categories: > Elder Abuse

Comments: *Son and daughter-in-law leave mother dead for a month in adjoining apartment.*

Source: Northwest Indiana Times [www.nwitimes.com]

IOWA

Lake City	2/7/2003
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Title: Lake City Man Charged in Nursing Home Sexual Assault
Categories: > Nursing Home > Prosecution

Comments: *Facility was a care center for mentally retarded people; age of victim not reported.*

Source: The IowaChannel.com [www.theiowachannel.com]

KENTUCKY

Jefferson County	1/14/2003
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Title: Woman stole from retired priest to gamble; Riverboats' patron must repay \$89,650
Categories: > Elder Abuse > Prosecution

Comments: *Victim was husband's uncle; reckless exploitation among charges.*

Source: The Courier-Journal [www.courier-journal.com]

Author: Grace Schneider [gschneider@courier-journal.com]

MISSISSIPPI

Madison	3/4/2003
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Title: Old, alone and starving: Woman finally getting help
Categories: > Self-Neglect > Services

Comments: *Includes data that the state Department of Human Services investigated 1218 adult abuse cases in 2001 and substantiated 151.*

Source: The Clarion-Ledger [www.clarionledger.com]

Author: Riva Brown [rvbrown@jackson.gannett.com]

MISSOURI

St. Joseph	3/30/2003
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Title: Elder abuse a growing problem
Categories: > Elder Abuse > Nursing Home

Comments: *Widow's son steals \$1 million from her. Article also includes 2000 domestic and institutional abuse cases for Buchanan County.*

Source: St. Joseph News-Press [www.stjoenews-press.com]

Author: Kristi Bailey [kristib@npgco.com]

(continued on page 19)

... Local Stories Database

St. Joseph 3/30/2003

Title: Elder abuse victims can get state's help
Categories:
 > Elder Abuse
 > Services

Comments: Also discusses InterServ's abuse prevention programs.

Source: St. Joseph News-Press [www.stjoenews-press.com]

Author: Kristi Bailey [kristib@npgco.com]

NORTH CAROLINA

Swain County 3/19/2003

Title: Elder Abuse: Rapid growth in senior population reveals cracks in caregiver system
Categories:
 > Elder Abuse
 > Services

Comments: Includes information on Elderwatch, gatekeepers.

Source: Smoky Mountain News [www.smokymountainnews.com]

Author: Becky Johnson

OREGON

Bandon 2/22/2003

Title: Investigation continues into senior citizen death
Categories:
 > Nursing Home

Comments: Nursing home resident dies of complications from bilateral femur fractures.

Source: The World Link [www.theworldlink.com]

Washington County 2/11/2003

Title: Elderly victims get protective help from programs
Categories:
 > Elder Abuse
 > Services

Comments: Discusses county Adult Protective Services and Elder Safe, a program of the District Attorney and Sheriff's offices.

Source: The Hillsboro Argus [www.oregonlive.com]

PENNSYLVANIA

Washington 1/4/2003

Title: State police plan to charge Washington nurse with stealing seniors' pain drugs
Categories:
 > Elder Abuse
 > Nursing Home
 > Prosecution

Comments: Nursing home RN also charged with neglect.

Source: Observer-Reporter [www.observer-reporter.com]

Author: Christie Campbell [chriscam@observer-reporter.com]

SOUTH DAKOTA

Canton 1/22/2003

Title: Canton woman accused of [abuse of] nursing home residents
Categories:
 > Elder Abuse
 > Nursing Home
 > Prosecution

Comments: Allegations are that she twisted one man's genitals and refused to let another one use the bathroom.

Source: Aberdeen News [www.aberdeennews.com]

(continued on page 20)

... Local Stories Database

Canton 1/22/2003

Title: Nursing Assistant Accused of Abusing Patient
Source: KSFY [www.ksfy.com]

Categories:
 > Elder Abuse
 > Nursing Home
 > Prosecution

TEXAS

San Antonio 3/20/2003

Title: And The Beat Goes On
Source: San Antonio Current [www.zwire.com]
Author: Laura M. Fries

Categories:
 > Elder Abuse
 > Services

Comments: Long article on an older battered woman and the San Antonio's Battered Women's Shelter.

VIRGINIA

Petersburg 3/10/2003

Title: Preventing abuse of the elderly
Source: The Progress-Index [www.zwire.com]
Author: Jennifer Francis

Categories:
 > Elder Abuse
 > Services

Comments: Discusses Virginia's new Elder Abuse Prevention Department.

Williamsburg 1/25/2003

Title: Disabled patient claims sex abuse by bus driver
Source: The Virginia Gazette [www.vagazette.com]
Author: Brandy Centolanza

Categories:
 > Vulnerable Adult Abuse

WASHINGTON

Snohomish 3/12/2003

Title: Nursing home rape reported: Alleged victim was 74-year-old male Alzheimer's patient
Source: Seattle Post-Intelligencer [http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com]
Author: Jennifer Langston [jenniferlangston@seattlepi.com]

Categories:
 > Elder Abuse
 > Nursing Home

WISCONSIN

Delafield 3/26/2003

Title: Police probe financial elder abuse case
Source: Lake County Reporter [www.zwire.com]

Categories:
 > Elder Abuse

Comments: Niece allegedly takes out credit cards in great aunt's name, sells aunt's silverware.

RELATED LINKS:

The whole database, constantly updated, is available at www.WordBridges.net/elderabuse/media

... Creative Database Use

(Continued from page 7)

That's why it's important to know what the media is saying about you; if it isn't good, you may want to take action. For an example of coverage that might have been made an agency's work in the community more difficult, see "Family Fights for Custody of Parents; Howard Co. Council on Aging Removes Elderly Parents From Home," April 22, 2003, at www.thewbalchannel.com/.

- **Identifying prosecution trends and successful prosecutors.** *Adult Abuse Review* will continue to summarize the publicly-reported results of elder/vulnerable adult prosecutions, but the database is another way of tracking prosecution trends and identifying prosecutors who might be willing to consult on a similar case in your jurisdiction.
- **Identifying new service ideas.** Yes, we're in a tight economy where budgets are shrinking nearly everywhere. That's *precisely* the time to be open to new ideas, which may help service dollars stretch further. Innovative elder/vulnerable adult abuse service ideas are showing up in mainstream media to a surprising extent; the database can help identify these.
- **Locating training aids.** Many elder/vulnerable adult abuse training programs rely on case studies or other methods to help trainees grasp the concepts being presented. Newspaper articles -- particularly those which are accompanied by reproducible photographs of victims -- are an excellent way to make elder/vulnerable adult abuse "real." It should also be noted that although some may dismiss case studies as constructed and therefore possibly

"exaggerated," newspaper articles are often viewed as more reflective of the "real world."

- **Researching national trends.** Is one region of the country more elder abuse-savvy than another? What kind of information is the public getting about elder/vulnerable adult abuse from the media? What *aren't* they getting? How does media coverage of elder/vulnerable adult abuse issues change over time? These sorts of research questions are more easily answered by a ready-made database like this one.
- **Identifying story ideas for your media to pursue.** As mentioned earlier, it might be a good public education strategy to pitch elder/vulnerable adult abuse story ideas to local reporters. For one thing, giving *them* an idea to pursue is a whole lot cheaper than designing, creating, and delivering a from-the-ground-up media campaign yourself! The database can help you identify ideas that have worked in other places that might import well to your jurisdiction. If the media in your area already regularly covers elder/vulnerable adult abuse issues, you may be able to spot trends in what the editors and reporters think is newsworthy, and slant your tips (or advocacy efforts) accordingly.

That's our list. Please let us know what uses *you* find for the Media Coverage of Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse database.

... Elder Abuse By Strangers and Others

emphasis added) Obviously, state laws may define elder abuse differently, and, in fact, California's elder abuse law requires only that someone causing pain or mental suffering know that the victim is an elder or dependent adult (same book, p. 185).

Many people in the field of elder abuse believe that the term needs to be confined to situations in which there is an "expectation of trust," a relationship of blood, or when someone is paid to be a caregiver. Others are not so concerned that the definition remain so bounded. What's YOUR opinion? What are the pros and cons of extending "elder abuse" to reach robbers, rapists, and plumbers? Let us know; we'll publish the results in an upcoming AAR. | Loree@WordBridges.net |

Mental Health/APS Collaborations Wanted

If you are part of a collaboration involving Adult Protective Services and a mental health service, the National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (NCPEA) wants to hear from you by **June 16, 2003**.

As part of its work under the National Center on Elder Abuse, NCPEA is conducting a research study of interfaces between mental health services and APS in responding to elder and dependent adult abuse. Information about the survey can be found at the NCPEA website, www.preventelderabuse.org/. (Go to the bottom of the "What's New" column on the home page.)

For further information, contact Pamela B. Teaster, Ph.D., pteaster@uky.edu or 859-257-1450, ext. 80196.

... What the Database Tells Us

(Continued from page 6)

2. Victims always despise the abuser and want to report the abusive situation.
3. No one would ever abuse an older person.
4. Elder abuse means the same thing all across the country and falls into one of three categories: Physical, Emotional, and Financial.
5. Neglect occurs out of ignorance of what an older adult needs.
6. The risk of being abused varies based upon a person's income level.
7. Model prevention and intervention solutions for child abuse can be replicated for elder abuse.
8. Older people lose the ability to make choices, such as financial decisions.
9. Older adult and young adults respond similarly to abuse.
10. Children who abuse elderly parents were likely to be abused themselves.
11. Passing laws to protect older adults will solve the problem of elder abuse.

For the most part, there were few, if any, articles that seemed to reinforce any of these misconceptions. So there is good news. There just needs to be more of it.

Sources for the Database

- Google News Search (www.news.google.com)
On at least a twice-daily basis, this database -- which covers more than 4500 media outlets -- is searched for "abuse" and "neglect," which results in more than 1,000 headlines and one-sentence descriptions being scanned daily.
- Inclusion Daily Express (<http://www.inclusiondaily.com/>)
This subscription service provides an emailed 5-days a week summary and set of links to articles related to people with disabilities.
- Current Awareness in Aging Research E-Clippings (for information, email jsolock@ssc.wisc.edu)
This free service provides an emailed 5-days-a-week digest (with links) to articles related to aging.
- SNALFnews.com (<http://www.snalfnews.com>)
This website provides weekday summaries and links to articles of interest to the long-term care industry.
- National Center for Victims of Crime News Room (<http://www.ncvc.org/press/news/>)
NCVC provides weekday summaries and links to selected articles about crime victims at this site.
- Violence Against Women Network In The News (http://www.vawnet.org/VNL.2/library/_news_.php)
VAWnet provides periodically-updated highlights of news related to domestic violence against women here.
- EurekAlert Social/Behavioral Science News Release (<http://www.eurekalert.org/bysubject/social.php>)
On a daily basis, EurekAlert publishes press releases on newly-released results of social/behavioral science studies conducted by its members.
- National Ombudsman Resource Center Gazette (http://www.ltombudsman.org/ombpublic/49_510_1834.CFM)
The NORC Gazette is a weekly emailed newsletter that has a limited circulation. However, once or twice a month the Gazettes are uploaded onto this website. Items in the Gazette sometimes relate to media coverage.
- *AAR*readers
We are especially grateful to Lori Delagrammatikas of the Riverside County (CA) APS for collecting and periodically sending us articles. If you run across articles you think we may have missed, please send an email tip to Loree@WordBridges.net.

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We look forward to keeping you informed!