



CANADIAN NETWORK for  
the PREVENTION of ELDER ABUSE

RÉSEAU CANADIEN pour la PRÉVENTION  
du MAUVAIS TRAITEMENT des AÎNÉS

# Under-Reporting of Abuse: How is this Possible?

April 2020 - CNPEA | Funded by: Prairie Action Foundation

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Co-Investigators: Dr. Donna Goodridge (Sask), Dr. Christine A. Walsh (AB), Michelle Ranville (A&O)

Research Assistants: Marina Cewick, Labe Songose, Carla Liepert, Kelly Hall, Kali Grainger

Community Advisory Committee Representatives (SCOA, Kerby Centre, A&O)

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which I live and work is the unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the territories of the x<sup>w</sup>məθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.

# YOUR PRESENTER



Kerstin Roger, PhD, Professor, Department of Community Health Sciences, Max Rady College of Medicine, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Manitoba.

Research focuses on aging and the family, abuse of older adults, including mental wellness and caregiving, and how these interface with health care and a wide range of chronic illnesses. Dr. Roger has been a Principal Investigator on multi-site nationally funded research (e.g. PHAC, SSHRC, Movember, federal government), as well as conducting provincial and regionally funded research. She has worked on international collaborations, local not-for-profit community initiatives, and continues to co-author and engage graduate students in her research.



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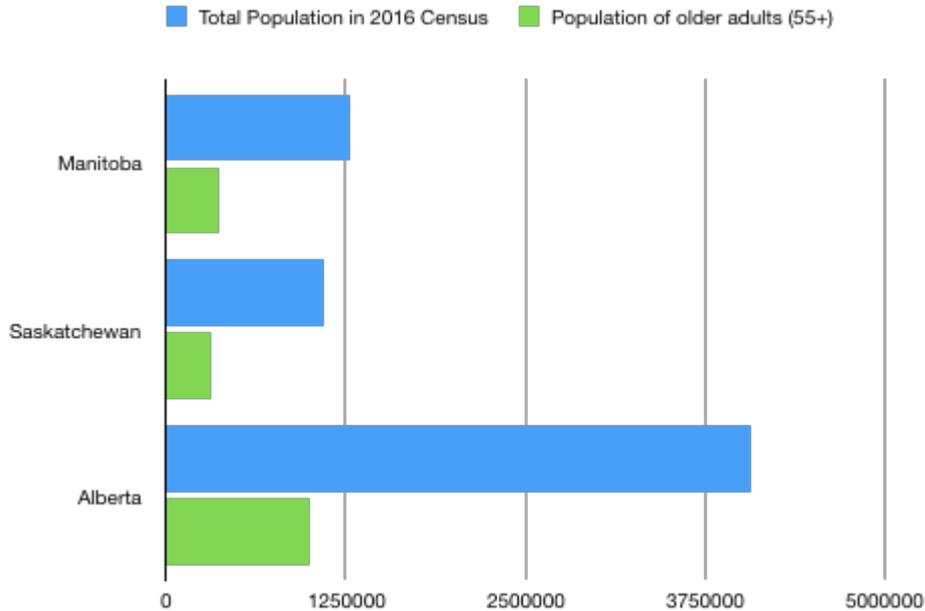
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## Study Goals

- ▶ Tri-provincial study - Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan
- ▶ Exploring the reasons for, and context of underreporting, in cases of neglect and abuse of older adults.
  - ▶ Address knowledge gap in individuals, community, services
  - ▶ Understanding help-seeking behaviours of older adults
- ▶ Environmental and media scan, literature review, qualitative interviews, annual reports
- ▶ Findings will be used to develop recommendations to improve disclosure opportunities and services

# Demographics of the Prairie Provinces



## 5 Largest Cities by Province, by Population:

Manitoba: Winnipeg, Brandon, Steinbach, Portage la Prairie, Thompson

Saskatchewan: Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Swift Current

Alberta: Calgary, Edmonton, Red Deer, Lethbridge, St. Albert

# Environmental Scan

- ▶ Composed of:
  - A general scan of media across Canada on issues of abuse of older adults
  - Overall scan of resources for older adults, not specific to abuse
- ▶ Exposed a lack of resources
  - Alberta was strongest: focused in urban centres, but also smaller cities across province
  - Manitoba had many, focused in urban centre Winnipeg
  - Saskatchewan had the least resources but also smaller population base, no specific agencies /services for abused older adults, some good overall resources for older adults do exist

# Media Scan & Themes

- From 2011 to Present (March 5, 2020), ongoing
- Over 60 media pieces were found including: News Articles, Conferences, Reports, Radio
- 38 News articles from sources such as CBC, CityNews, Global News, Globe and Mail, Winnipeg Free Press
- 14 News articles were found in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba

- Themes
  - Most articles were found in Ontario and British Columbia
    - **Few** articles in Prairie Provinces
  - Within the Prairies: AB had the highest number of articles, second MB, very few were found in SK.
  - Most articles promote World End Elder Abuse Day (WEEAD)
  - Very few articles in which older adults reported abuse

# Headlines

CBC NEWS | MENU

news Top Stories Local The National Opinion World Canada

Canada

## Elder abuse: A growing dilemma in an aging population

Canada

CBC News · Posted: Mar 01, 2011 3:00 PM ET | Last Updated: March 1, 2011

As the baby boom generation ages, Canada is becoming an older country. According to Statistics Canada, eight million of us will be over the age of 65 by 2031. That's nearly 25 per cent of the population.

(March 1st, 2011)  
Canada

THE GLOBE AND MAIL CANADA

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UNIGLASS Generations

## Elder-abuse cases seldom lead to criminal charges, Canadian study says

TRENDING

- 1 Postcard from the front lines of the coronavirus outbreak: Rome as ghost town
- 2 OPINION Why the Canada Revenue Agency should do our taxes for us RITA TRICHUR
- 3 Long-time columnist, editor Mike Babad 'was at the very heart' of The Globe and Mail's journalism

(December 16, 2013) Canada

CityNews

## Senior speaks out to end elder abuse

An Edmonton senior is sharing her story of abuse to create awareness for World Elder Abuse Day, which falls on Saturday. Rachele Elsiufi has her story.

Jun 14, 2019, 6:29 PM

Advertisement

CityNews SENIOR SPEAKS OUT AGAINST ELDER ABUSE

FRI 20° 6:04 pm

(July 14, 2019) Edmonton, AB

# Literature Review

- ▶ Literature review dated 2013 to 2019
  - ▶ From search engines related to : social work, health, abuse, geriatrics and nursing
- ▶ Three major themes:
  - ▶ Importance of Relationships
  - ▶ Barriers to Reporting
  - ▶ Service Providers

# Literature Review Themes

## ► Importance of Relationships:

- Reporting abuse largely dependent on kinship ties: parental bond, domestic situations (Dow et al. 2019).
- Abuse by perpetrator: see chart (Jackson, 2016)

Type of Abuse	Most Common Perpetrator
Neglect	Adult Children
Physical	Partners/spouses
Psychological/Verbal	Partners/spouses
Financial	Family members and caregivers

## **Barriers to Reporting:**

**Difficulty naming abuse (Roger, Brownridge, & Ursel, 2014; Zhang, 2019)**

**Fear of negative consequences for abuser, to themselves, belief that abuse was not perpetrators fault, feelings of self-blame, shame and embarrassment (Dow et al., 2019)**

**Timing, delayed reporting based on proximity/closeness to abuser (Hafemeister, 2015)**

**Not wanting law enforcement involved, for many reasons (Jackson & Hafemeister, 2014)**

## Service Providers:

Feel mandatory reporting does not ensure victim safety (DeLima, Navarro, Enguidan & Wilber, 2015; Jackson & Hafemeister, 2013)

Service providers lack appropriate training and resources (Kurkurina et al., 2018)

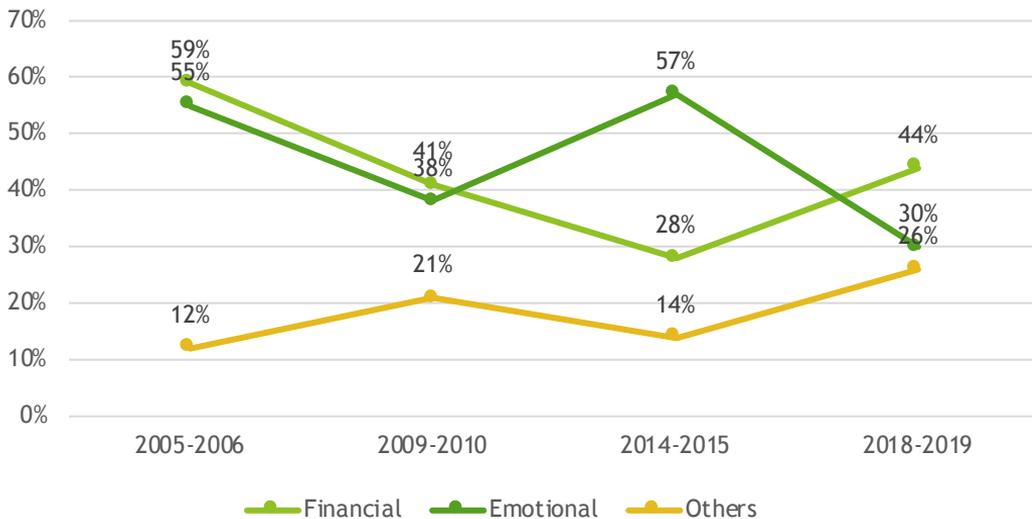
# Quantitative Data

Annual reports from A & O (Manitoba) 2005-2010 and Kerby Centre (Alberta) 2014-2019.

# QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS (MB / AB)

- Females make up approximately three-quarters (75.5%) of those who reported abuse from 2005 - 2010.
- In each year (2005-2019), financial and psychological reports of abuse are most prevalent.
- According to data, adult children are reported most frequently as perpetrators; and adult sons more often than adult daughters.
- In Manitoba, given data reviewed, women reported using the Safe Suite more often than men.
- Reports of elder abuse most frequently came from urban centers; information on reports of elder abuse was less available in rural/remote areas.

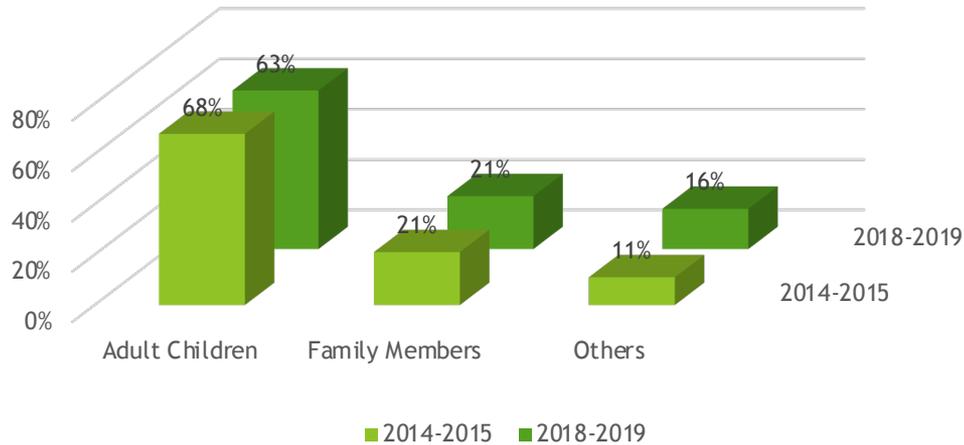
## Most Prevalent Older Adults Abuse Reported



Source: A & O Annual report 2005 -2019

*Note: 'Others' refers to other abuse such as Neglect, Sexual and Physical*

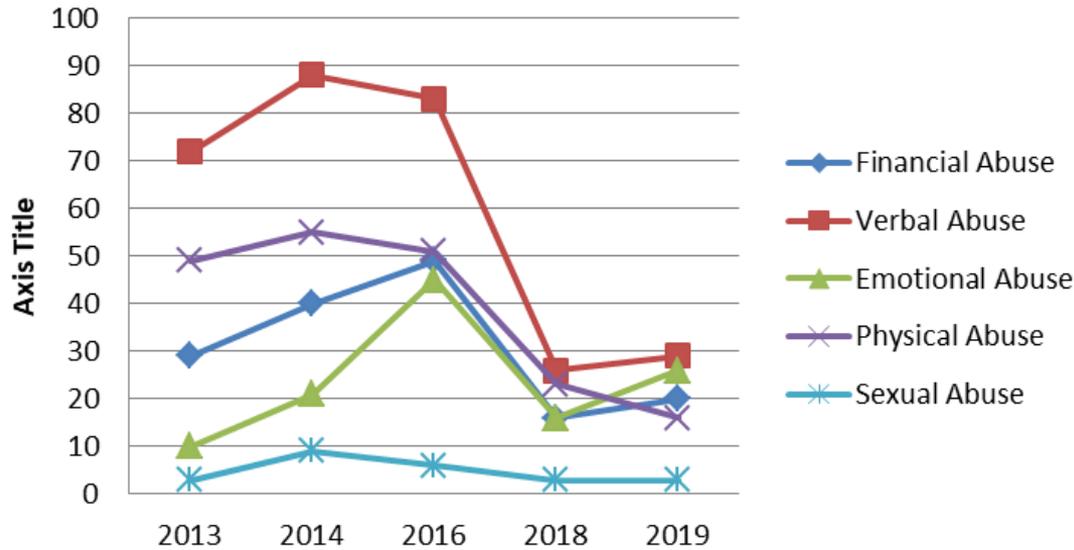
## Most Prevalent Perpetrators 2014-2019



Source: A & O Annual report 2014 -2019

***Note: 'Others' refers to other perpetrators such as Friends, Neighbours, Tenants and Roommates.***

## Prevalent type of abuse reported



Source Kerby Centre Annual Report 2013-2019

# Qualitative Data Methods

- Ethics approved in each province by each academic site
- Recruitment posters were distributed over 6 months at 3 intervals through community agencies throughout the provinces:
  - Senior centres, public newsletters, health regions, older adult resource centres
- Older adults/family member:** completed semi-structured interviews with trained counselor or trained researcher, in selected private spaces, or by phone/skype
  - Participants were asked to complete demographic forms, not all did so
  - Pseudonyms were assigned immediately following ethics protocols
  - Interviews were audio-recorded then transcribed
  - All identifying information was removed
  - Participants approved individual transcripts for research use, when ethics required this
- Service Providers:** completed semi-structured interviews by research assistants, over phone and skype
  - Same as above as relevant

## Qualitative Data Sample by Province

	AB	MB	SK
Number of Older Adults/Family Interviewed	10	5	0
Number of Service Providers /Professionals Interviewed	10	7	10

## Selected Themes

1. reporting/disclosure works well when:
  - a. word abuse is not used
  - b. public presentation with the opportunity for an informal private conversation afterwards
  - c. small steps or strategies offer relief, avoid major changes

## Reporting does not go well when:

- a. someone is punished (either major or minor) for reporting/discussing
- b. it is unclear what activities should be reported as abuse  
(e.g. expression of anger, missing money, not returning phone calls)
- c. the person being abused is not able to tell the truth to someone about the abuse, they report other reasons for bruises or missing money
- d. reported, but perpetrator did not face consequences

# Recommendations

- Education: Create community awareness of abuse of older adults, and develop resources to combat abuse. Create opportunities for older adults to talk about what is going on. Develop training for wide range of professionals.
- Housing: Provision of housing for abused elders, Safe Suite is temporary housing.
- Counselling: Provision of emotional and psychological support for older adults who disclose.
- Funding: to assist community centers/law/police so they can focus more resources on this issue.
  
- Data collection: There is a need to establish a central organization in charge of investigating older adults' abuse, collecting data. If more people talk about this issue, this will be reflected in how we can collect data.

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