

Lifetime Abuse and Quality of Life among Older Persons

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Abstract

Few studies have evaluated the impact of lifetime abuse on quality of life among older adults. By using a multi-national study we aimed to assess the subjective perception of quality of life among persons that have reported abuse during lifetime. The respondents were 4,467 (2,559 women) persons aged 60-84 years living in seven European countries (Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Spain and Sweden). Lifetime abuse was assessed by using a structured questionnaire and allowed to assess lifetime experiences of abuse. Quality of life was assessed with the WHOQOL-OLD. Overall, 45.5% of participants reported being abused during lifetime, with psychological abuse as the most common reported type (34.5%). The prevalence of lifetime physical abuse was 11.5%, sexual abuse 5%, injuries 4.3% and financial abuse 18.5%. After adjustment for potential confounders, we found that to have had any abusive experience decreased 4.14 (95%CI: -7.45, -0.84) the score of sensory abilities. Psychological abuses was associated with lower autonomy ($\beta=-2.38$, 95%CI -4.46, -0.30) and past/present/future activities ($\beta=-2.95$, 95%CI -4.68, -1.22). Physical abuse with injuries significantly decreased social participation $\beta=-2.86$, 95%CI -5.67, -0.06). Intimacy was also negatively associated with psychological abuse ($\beta=-3.51$, 95%CI -6.29, -0.72), physical abuse with injury ($\beta=-5.00$, 95%CI -9.11, -0.89) and sexual abuse ($\beta=-4.05$, 95%CI -7.53, -0.56). Our results showed that lifetime abuse impacts negatively on perceived quality of life among older persons. Quality of life could be improved if violence prevention is ensured at every stage of the life course.