Elderly Policies: 
With Special Focus on Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

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This piece of literature discusses how major policies and programs in the United States play a major role in the lives of elderly individuals. Most of the policies that are exemplified by Barusch place a strong focus on the importance of housing. According to the 1988 United States’ Senate Report, the elderly population made up almost half of those who were living in major federal housing programs. This is just one of the many credible sources of information that the author uses to point out how important the policy has been in the lives of the elderly. Another important policy that is expressed as a concern for the elderly population is Medicare. Many nursing homes are privatized and do not accept Medicare as a form of coverage for their services. For a high percentage of the elderly population, these private nursing homes cannot be afforded, which may result in treatment of lesser quality. Abuse, neglect and exploitation are all characteristics that may accompany these state funded and low-income nursing homes. Overall, this source gives an insight as to how public policies like Medicare and public housing affect the elderly population as a whole, and more specifically, elderly individuals who have financial difficulties.


Cowart and Quadagno discuss health insurance coverage policies that will benefit the elderly population, especially those who are currently living in nursing homes. The main focus of this book is on proving that there can be a sensible long-term health care policy for the elderly. The policy the authors best support and feel can be adapted to fit the elderly population is private long-term care insurance. This policy, according to Cowart and Quadagno, currently is affordable to about only 20% of the elderly. The major focus of this book is on how to better the current situation for the elderly, which is why they propose three main suggestions as to how this private long-term care insurance policy could be altered for the better. I feel that this policy is important because typically private nursing homes can provide better health care than publicly run facilities. The authors focus on making the policy more affordable, offering tax credits and also forming public-private partnerships to create a much more solid policy. This source is credible because of the fact that these authors are working on an agenda and are making a proposal for amending an existing policy. In addition, Marie Cowart is one of the professors at the Pepper Institute on Aging and Public Policy and the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at Florida State University. This policy would also provide my paper with an idea on how the elderly are struggling with finding affordable coverage for health care in nursing homes and home care and the ways in which this is currently being worked on in the government.


The social problem of elder abuse and mistreatment is not only found in the United States, but has been an increasing issue all over the world. Decalmer and Glendenning explain how England, a country that is much like the United States in many ways, has recently announced the social problem of elder abuse. This book focuses on some of the key policy issues that are different between the U.S. and Britain in the way in which they responding to elder abuse. The United States created the Older Americans Act, which required all states to have a form of adult protective legislation. Britain on the
other hand, went an alternate route. They believe that the way to respond to elder abuse is not through the criminal method of mandatory reporting, but instead, through seeing and treating it as a social problem. They Britain established the pressure group known as Action on Elder Abuse in 1993 and also published the Department of Health’s guidelines entitled *No Longer Afraid*. Both countries have similar rates of elder abuse, though they are dealing with the issue using different policy methods. It is important to see where the United States stands in relation to other countries in regard to elder abuse and the policies that are established. Also, this source provides key information about critical policies that have been adapted not only by the United States, but also by Britain, to work to end the social problem in discussion, which I will be able to use in my paper. The authors use numerous sources that provide empirical data. In addition, many of the sources that are cited are nationally funded organizations for either the United States or Britain, which proves the credibility of this source.


This book has a great deal of focus on the issues that co-exist with the elderly and their dependency on nursing homes for care or treatment. Carroll Estes takes a critical look at the current way in which many elderly men and women in the United States are institutionalized each year. She explains that the problem of social isolation, which is frequently linked with elder abuse, is growing more frequent. Along with the criticisms of the current policies (including Medicare) that govern the elderly population, Estes also provides a policy that would be beneficial to them. The “Healthy People 2000 National Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Objectives” is the policy that Estes believes will make a difference in the lives of the elderly. The three main ways that this program will benefit this specific population is by increasing a healthy life span for each American, by reducing health disparities and also by gaining access to prevention and preventative health services. This source is credible for the main reason that she not only utilized numerous influential sources, and uses a scholarly publishing company, but she also references organizations that are federally funded like the Administration on Aging. Lastly, this source will be beneficial to my paper because I feel as though it gives a positive outlook toward future policies and does an excellent job at critiquing the existing way in which social policies are formed around the elderly. In addition, Estes does take into account social class, race, gender and numerous other important factors when considering how the social policy will have an effect on the population at hand.


The authors wrote this book on elderly abuse after attending the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs in 1980. Their plan was to establish a proposal that would not only show the severity of the problem of elder abuse in the United States, but also to form an intervention program or policy that would help these elderly victims. This book is particularly interesting because the authors were directly involved in the research process and also of the proposal making which fortifies the source’s credibility. The section of the book that I found to be the most beneficial and relevant to my paper topic was the chapter on recent trends in elder abuse policy. Basically, the authors describe how there is currently a missing component in the elderly policy leadership. The first policy ever created regarding abuse against the elderly occurred in 1978. This policy was called “Prevention, Identification, and Treatment of Elder Abuse Act.” Much of the discussion in this book is focused on policies such as this one and their early history. This work also focuses on how the Administration on Aging, a federally funded organization, works towards ending elder abuse by funding programs at the state and local level with
block grants. Overall this work will provide my paper with a solid background of early policies on elder abuse and on how policy planning for elderly abuse has progressed over the years. With credible sources like the Administration on Aging and the authors’ involvement in the meeting of the Massachusetts Office of Elder Affairs, this credible source will add a great deal of insight to my paper.


The authors of this book place a great deal of emphasis on pointing out to the reader what it is that causes elder abuse. One specific point that they make is in regards to the policy or program on elder abuse called the Massachusetts Model on mandatory reporting. The requirement to report mistreatment against elderly was passed into a law in Massachusetts in 1983 and has been in effect ever since that time. The only problem with this law was that the guideline for what exactly was to be reported was shaky. In order to clarify this problem, and hopefully minimize the elderly abuse that has taken place, the law was amended in 1988. The broader terms that previously existed, such as “serious abuse” were now defined more thoroughly and this law led to collaboration of nursing homes all over the United States. The authors also put strong amounts of emphasis on public awareness, because like many other researchers, they believe that as more individuals grow educated of a problem, more people will tend to work to better the conditions. With references to major laws and legislations, and using a scholarly publishing company, this source is definitely considered creditable. This book will be beneficial to the composition of my paper for the primary reason that it places a great deal of focus on policies that were established regarding elderly abuse in Massachusetts. Many of the other books and articles simply discuss policies that exist in the United States as a whole, and this book focuses on something much closer to home.

**PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES**


The NCEA Summit Model is a group of 80 experts who got together to make four major recommendations to put an end to elder abuse. These individuals came up with the primary goal of recognizing the needs and services of the victims of this abuse. There is both focus on individuals in long-term care facilities and also those in domestic situations. The second goal discussed in this profile article is the current situation of elder abuse. The Summit members want to bring national attention to this spreading problem. Next, the members worked toward assembling a multi-disciplinary team that would be able to respond to the problem of elder abuse and neglect. With a multi-disciplinary team in place, there is a much greater chance that successful results will be reached with the proposed policy. Finally, this group plotted to work toward bettering seven main characteristics that were identified as needing attention according to a survey taking by numerous national organizations. This group takes an extremely positive outlook on what can be done to better the current situation on elder abuse, which is why I feel it can be such an asset to my paper. Also, this article shows how a current situation can be worked and managed to adapt to the lives of the individuals who will be reliant on it. The credibility of this source is apparent in a number of ways. First, the article is in regards to a major National Policy Summit in December of 2001. Next, the author utilizes a number of different national organizations throughout the article in order to obtain substantial information. Finally, this peer-reviewed, scholarly article’s author is the Associate Director for Elder Rights with the National Association of Stat Units on
Aging in Washington, D.C and she is the Director for the National Center on Elder Abuse, which is funded by the Administration on Aging. These are both well known and credible national organizations that work on elderly abuse and other policies to help benefit the elderly population.


Among this follow-up study of 747 elders who were members of nursing homes during 1985 and 1995 (long-term care patients), researchers focused on observing the resident-to-resident mistreatment or abuse patterns that exist. Two factors that were believed to play a role in patient on patient abuse were the cognitive impairment that comes with old age and also the nursing home environment itself. This study was funded by the National Institute on Aging as an attempt to better the existing conditions of elder abuse in America. The study also involved the local police, which allows for more face-to-face interaction and also for the needs to be dealt with more directly. The fact that the authors take a look at how police interaction is a component in elderly abuse was an aspect of this article that I found would be a positive influence on my paper because there are few other sources that I found to include the police in the involvement of reporting. In addition, when you think of elder abuse in nursing homes you typically think of staff on patient abuse. This study is solely focused on the abuse that exists between patients, which can be controversial when it comes to reporting and mandatory reporting laws because they may be vague when it comes to this topic. As a nationally funded research study and being found in The American Geriatrics Society scholarly journal, this source is more than credible.


As a grant-in-aid program, the Older Americans Act was established in 1965 for a number of reasons, all of which were focused around individuals 60 years of age and older. The Older Americans Act (OAA) was developed under the Administration of Aging, which is one of the sub-departments of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Unfortunately, over the years, the funding for the OAA has not grown at an increasing rate, making it nearly impossible for the many networks that exist under this act to accomplish the goals that have been set. The author even refers to the OAA as a policy of the 1960’s and 1970’s because it still is fulfilling those social problems and not meeting the social problems in existence today. This policy has been amended various times since it was originally developed. Many of the amendments deal with funding, long-term health care and even collaboration efforts. One issue that was proposed to be reauthorized in the 1991 OAA was the organization called the National Association of State Units on Aging. This would allow for state control of programs that deal with abuse and neglect, exploitation and numerous other similar aspects. Binstock gives an extremely detailed break-down of the Older Americans Act and many of the revisions and proposals for revisions. This will help me with my paper because the OAA has been around since 1965 and has gone through numerous changes since that time. The author shows how it has changed its perspectives and roles on abuse and neglect and what the future entails. Being published in a peer-reviewed journal, this article’s credibility is not in question. The author provides a historical background while supporting his ideas with many references.

New York is among one of the few states that currently does not require mandatory reporting of abuse and neglect against the elderly. Caccamise and Mason use case specific examples on how the current laws in New York have led to worsened situations and even death of the elders. This article truly gives a unique perspective by providing personal examples, interviews with individuals, and ideas in how the policies in existence should be changed. New York is working towards more progressive social policies and programs like “Project 2015: The Future of Aging in New York State.” This new plan allows the members of research teams to come up with projected ways to fulfill the needs of the elderly. Another key component of this article is the fact that the Law Revision Commission in New York is working on amending the laws that currently exist governing the elderly and their rights against exploitation with a Power of Attorney. In addition, New York has recently organized a non-profit social agency called LifeSpan that sponsors over 30 programs to minimize elder abuse. This is a scholarly article that will provide my paper with projected ideas of how elder abuse will be improved in local states like New York. Since New York is such a major state, and it does not require reporting at this time, I think this article is important to show how the authors feel this can be changed to make the policies and programs that are in effect better for society.


The frequency of elderly abuse and the reporting among hospitalized elders has become a common topic in social welfare. The rate of abuse to the elderly population is reported in about one in fourteen cases in the United States. Comparatively, between one and ten percent of elders are victims of some sort of abuse. As you can see just from this one statistic, the rate of amount of reported abuse and individuals being abused does not evenly correlate. The authors of this article performed a research study of 730 elders who were hospitalized in 2004 and 2005. They asked numerous questions and made different observations as to what percentages showed signs of being at risk of abuse. This study is part of a larger research project on elder abuse among the hospitalized. Since the authors are involved in an agenda with a larger project, working toward better the conditions of hospitalized elders, this is a credible source to use in my paper. The authors of this article all obtain significant titles, including working with the Department of Gerontology, the Faculty of Social Welfare and Health Sciences, Haifa University (Haifa, Isreal), Social Work Department, Rambam Medical Center (Haifa, Isreal) and The Geriatric Unit at the Hadassah Medical Center (Ein Karem, Jerusalem, Isreal). These individuals have experience not only in the United States’ social welfare policies, but also have plenty of experience with foreign social welfare policies, which ultimately might allow for me to add something to my paper that other sources would not allow for.


Placing a special focus on the minority populations of elders, this article focuses on how the Older Americans Act of 1965 has played a role in shaping the lives of these individuals. The research that was done on this topic focused on the time the act was established to 1991. The act does place emphasis on the low-income communities of elderly people. This act also influenced national organizations such as the Association National Pro Persons Mayores, The National Asian/Pacific Resource Center on Aging, The National Caucus and Center on Black Aged and the National Indian Council on Aging to work toward creating better conditions for minority elder groups. One view that the authors hold is that the participation level definitely needs to be increased. Policy makers and
advocates have specified this desire for increased participation, specifically in intrastate funding, over the years that this research took place. Ultimately, I feel as though this article will be an asset to my research paper for the primary reason that it does focus on the minority population, which is something that not many of my other resources placed much emphasis on. It is important to see how the only federally standing act for the elderly influences the minority groups of the United States. In addition, I feel that this is a secure source to use for the reason that it was found in a scholarly journal. Generations is a peer-reviewed journal, and this article had a great deal of statistical data.


This article concentrates on what it means when an individual speaks about “elder abuse.” It explains in great detail how adult protective laws or acts currently are in place to protect adults of all ages, especially the elderly. In addition, the author explains that there is a great deal that needs to be done before society is at a point where elder abuse has been minimized or eliminated. One extremely important point found in this piece of literature is the fact that elderly individuals are often victims of abuse because they are typically seen as having low social status. Another point of discussion is the mandatory reporting laws on elder abuse, neglect and exploitation, which have been discussed in a number of different articles and pieces of literature that I have researched. Many states now require that any professionals who suspect abuse must report their beliefs to be investigated further. Macolini explains both the positive and negative aspects of mandatory reporting from the views of society, the healthcare professionals and the elderly victims. This aspect of the article will be quite important in my paper because of the fact that most of the other sources I found only pointed out the positive aspects that accompany mandatory reporting of elder abuse, so this allows for a different perspective. Also, I feel that this source will be important in my paper for the reason that unlike most others that focus on elder abuse in nursing homes, this one looks at interfamilial violence, or violence on the elders that occurs within the family unit. This is something that I feel may often be overlooked when one thinks of elder abuse. This source appears to be quite credible in the sense that the author makes dozens of references to reliable works and organizations. In addition, a peer reviewed and scholarly journal can be a very credible source to take information from.


The Older Americans Act (OAA), passed in 1965, was established to provide services and meet the needs of the older population. This is the only federal program in existence in the United States that is in effect to service the elderly. In order to make sure the goals of this act are maintained and achieved as planned, a multidisciplinary network has been created over the years. Within this network, there are tens of thousands of members and sites where services are provided. One of the main objectives of The Older Americans Act is to create a system of rights that will protect the benefits and available services that the elderly receive. One example of this is through the nursing homes that are set up. In addition, the OAA has been successful for such a long time for the main reason that it functions on the federal, state and local levels. The most relevant part of this article to my paper is the section on “Elder Rights.” The elderly are guaranteed protection under the OAA from elder abuse, age discrimination, exploitation and neglect, among numerous other major social issues. Through this act, state elder abuse reporting systems have been established and advocacy services have provided assistance for many individuals. Overall, this act will be quite beneficial to my paper because it discusses a social policy meant to aid the elderly that has been around for over forty years. It discusses the major aspects of the Older Americans
Act as well as giving a brief outlook toward what can be done in the future. This is published in a peer-reviewed journal and utilizes historical data. This article provides the reader with statistics, rather than opinions and it can surely be considered a credible source.

LEGAL DOCUMENTS


This source is quite different from a majority of the other sources I located regarding elder abuse and neglect. Catherine Hawes, who holds numerous credible titles, testified before the U.S. Senate Committee of Finance. Her proposal is for a way in which the United States can take preventative measures for abuse on the elderly. Her argument is supported throughout the testimony with personal interviews with victims of elder abuse or individuals who have witnessed acts of abuse or neglect in one way or another. The main conclusion that Hawes draws is to eliminate this social problem by creating policies that would ensure each nursing home or long-term care facility had sufficient staff on hand at all times. Also, she believes that quality of training that these staff members received is a key component in ending elder abuse. This policy proposal seems like if it were passed it could be a beneficial social welfare policy that would help fight the growing problem of elder abuse in America. Catherine Hawes does a great job at making her testimony credible by including personal interviews with individuals, using reliable sources such as the Administration on Aging (AoA), and ultimately have her testimony documented before the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance. This article will allow me to incorporate aspects of individual input through the personal interviews, solid facts and statistics and ways in which a policy proposal as simple as sufficient staffing in nursing homes would make a huge impact on this social problem.

WEBSITES


The Administration on Aging gives an explanation of how elder abuse actually is made up of numerous different aspects. In fact, elder abuse is defined as an “umbrella term” which is made up of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, financial or material exploitation, neglect, self-neglect and abandonment. In addition, each of these sub-categories is thoroughly defined on this source site. The next important issue discussed in this source is the reporting of elderly abuse. The part of this that I found so interesting and which I found to be beneficial to my paper was the fact that the elderly individual does have the right to refuse the reporting and also refuse any services from Adult Protective Services (APS). None of the other sources go into any detail about elders having the right to refuse the mandatory reporting. The Administration on Aging provides a great deal of grants for state and local programs to protect the elderly from being victims of abuse. They set up emergency hotlines, clinics, awareness programs and much more. Many of the grants and programs are listed out in this source, which will also be great to use in my paper. The Administration on Aging is a credible source that is a federal government program. This organization is part of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, but places all its focus on the elderly population.