The Significance of Elder Abuse and Neglect

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Elder abuse and neglect cost the government money though Medicaid spending to help correct whatever injuries have occurred as a result of the abuse or neglect. With an increasing elderly population that cost will only grow, but the more significant cost of elder abuse and neglect is the decrease in the quality of life loss by the victims and the injuries suffered. We are all susceptible to elder abuse as we age and I’ll go over the unfortunate results of such abuse and neglect.

Elderly adults who are exposed to violence may experience black eyes, bruises, lacerations and/or death. Physical abuse on the elderly can easily led to fractures due to decrease bone strength, which comes with advance age. One of the worst fractures for the elderly is a hip fracture. In my experience as a nurse I’ve seen hip fractures lead to immobility which can lead to pneumonia or pressure ulcers, which in turn leads to infections or long hospital stays which can lead to death.

Emotional abuse can be defined as the infliction of despair, anguish, fear, pain and/or distress through verbal or non-verbal acts. In addition treating an older adult as a child, socially isolating, intimidating and giving the silent treatment are other forms of emotional abuse. Verbal insults can cause feelings of aggravation and agitation, over time continuous abuse can lead to decrease self-esteem and depression. Elderly adults experiencing emotional abuse have been known to demonstrate behavior similar to dementia and delirium as well.

Experiences of sexual abuse are another problem plaguing the elderly. Sexual abuse is defined as any undesired sexual behavior by one person that is forced upon another. Sexual contact with someone who is unable to give consent is also considered sexual abuse. Bruises around breast or genital area are consequences of sexual abuse; they may result from the force used to subdue an individual in order to commit a sexual act. Sexually transmitted infection may result from the sexual act performed. Vaginal and/or anal bleeding may result depending on what kind of forced sexual act was committed.

Exploitation, unauthorized or improper use of an elder’s funds, property, or assets is financial abuse.

Reference

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