

Editorial

Bridget Penhale

Welcome to the penultimate issue of the volume for this year. In this issue, we are pleased to include several research papers on the broad topic of abuse and mistreatment of older people, reflecting work that is happening in several countries. Some readers may recall a paper that covered relevant Human Rights issues in relation to older people that I published last year (Penhale, 2023) and be interested to hear of some further recent developments in this area. In October 2023, the UN Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons presented a thematic report on Violence against and abuse and neglect of older persons (Report A/HRC/54/26) to the 54th session of the Human Rights Council held in Geneva at its autumn session for the year. Following the presentation of the report, towards the end of the Council session, a resolution on the human rights of older persons (Resolution A/HRC/54/L.20), was passed by member states of the Council, with a key focus on elder abuse and mistreatment. Within the resolution, the Council noted the Independent Expert's report on abuse (link to the report above) and condemned both the persistence and pervasiveness of all forms of violence, abuse and neglect of older people across the world. The resolution also reaffirmed that all older people should be able to live their lives free from violence, abuse and neglect.

One of the decisions contained in the resolution was that an Expert Workshop on elder abuse should be held during 2024 and a report of the proceedings of the workshop presented to the Council the following year (autumn, 2025). The Expert Workshop was held virtually over two days in the summer of this year, with presentations on a range of different topics relating to elder abuse. One of the key outcomes of the event was a consensus from participants that there was a need for a (new) UN convention on the rights of older persons and agreement that this should be taken forward. Whilst it is good to see recognition of the importance of elder abuse and mistreatment as a fundamental human rights issue, we still await further developments at international, as well as regional and national levels.

The first paper in this issue is by Chang and Yueh, from Taiwan and Japan and is a paper that reports a study that used a bibliometric analysis of elder abuse research that had been conducted over a period of more than three decades, since 1990. This was undertaken to establish any trends, popular areas for studies and gaps in the research done and to propose possible directions for future research. The analysis related to one specific research database and analysed more than 2,000 documents concerning elder abuse, using a visual analysis method. Despite evidence of increasing concerns and interest in the topic over time, this was in such areas as domestic and institutional settings and issues such as individuals living with dementia. Research on preventive and intervention measures appeared to be lacking and additional research to examine cross-cultural differences was considered necessary.

The second research paper in this issue is by Fundinho and Alves from Braga in Portugal and is a research paper that considers the topic of risk factors in elder abuse. The specific aspects of risk that were explored related to the interaction that can occur between cognition and functional dependence of older people and how such interaction(s) could

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affect elder abuse. The study included 62 participants in face-to-face interviews, which involved a series of psychological tests that individuals completed. Several interesting findings were established concerning predictions of the likelihood of different types of abuse occurring from the results of the tests undertaken in relation to an individual's skills in language, memory and perception. The study results support the hypothesis that risk of elder abuse is interactive in nature and suggests that developing an understanding about how risk factors relate to each other and interact can assist in designing further measures relating to the risk of elder abuse.

The following research paper on this issue is by Kokorelias and colleagues in Toronto, Canada and concerns the issue of policing relating to older people from different ethnic minorities. The paper reports on a study undertaken to explore the experiences and perceptions of a diverse group of older adults about the Toronto Police Service. The overall aim of this qualitative study was to help with the development of a curriculum for training police officers about working with older people. To achieve this, several virtual (online) focus groups were held with 26 older adults living in Toronto. The findings established a view that it was important for police officers to understand the range of intersectional issues that affect older people, as well as to be aware of their own attitudes and biases when working with older adults, particularly those from minority populations. And although police services were acknowledged as essential to keep older adults safe, there was some dissatisfaction with several ways that police officers interact with older people, especially those from minority populations in the community.

The final paper in the issue is a Book review provided by Ann Anka from the University of East Anglia (UK). It is a review of the recently published book, "Family Carers and Caring: What's it all about" by Alisoun Milne and Mary Larkin. The book provides extensive coverage of current issues relating to family carers and caregiving, which readers may find useful to consider.

We hope that you will find the papers in this issue of interest and use them in your safeguarding work. As usual, and previously stated, we are always interested in receiving contributions to the journal and invite readers to continue to contribute papers about adult safeguarding. If you may be interested in a contribution and want to discuss further before committing to writing and submitting a paper, do get in touch with one of the Editors as per our details on the inside cover of the journal, or on the webpage for the journal. And just a reminder that we have a special themed issue relating to topics concerning Caregivers, abuse and safeguarding in progress and likely to be published in the next volume (during, 2025).

We look forward to providing the final issue for this volume later in the year; this will include topics related to the broad spectrum of concerns that comprise adult safeguarding. And hope that your autumn and early winter months will be successful for you.

Bridget Penhale

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Reference

Penhale, B. (2023), "Human rights and older people: process and perspectives", *The Journal of Adult Protection*, Vol. 25 No. 3, pp. 105-116, doi: [10.1108/JAP-04-2023-0012](https://doi.org/10.1108/JAP-04-2023-0012).