



Life Long Justice

an elder justice initiative of

Appleseed

A Network of Public Interest Justice Centers



Translating Elder Abuse Research into Practice and Policy

Marie-Therese Connolly

Director, *Life Long Justice*, an elder justice initiative of Appleseed

Senior Scholar, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

marie.connolly@wilsoncenter.org

What the Acierno study tells us: At the intersection of research, practice and policy

Research

- Lots of **DV** among elders; most perpetrators are family, often partners
- Identifies some paths to prevention (increased social support)

Practice

- Little assistance for older victims by DV, sexual assault or victim programs
- Responses complicated by different systems with different approaches

Policy

- Identify and promote effective prevention efforts
- Identify the needs of older victims and how better to meet those needs
- Foster multidisciplinary and coordinated approaches; remove barriers
- Identify and promote laws, policies and programs we need for change

Recent New York Prevalence Study

(preliminary, unpublished data w/ similar findings)

6.7% (1 in 13) people in study were victimized by elder abuse, neglect or exploitation (Lachs, et al)

- Method: random digit dialing; 4000 New Yorkers, age 60+
- Different definitions may account for differing rates

Concludes vast under-reporting

- Only 1 in 23.5 cases of EA, N or E is reported
- 1 in 43.9 cases of financial exploitation reported
- 1 in 57.2 cases of neglect is reported
- (No mandatory reporting laws in New York)

Inherent limits of phone methodology (methodology excludes elders at greatest risk)

Some of the **MOST VULNERABLE** elders cannot respond to a phone survey.

- Inability to answer phone (est. 19.2% 75+ have lim. IADLs)
- Lack phone or phone service (est. 4.3% 55+)
- Presence of abuser prevents (truthful) responses (?)
- Dementia (est. 5.1 million 65+)
- In facilities or other settings (est. 2.5 million)

Inherent limits of phone methodology II

Decline in functional abilities results in increased risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Definition of critical Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs) in elders includes:

- Driving
- Cooking
- Shopping
- Managing medication; *and*
- **TELEPHONE USE**

CA Study: 47% of people with dementia cared for by family members are abused

Recent study shows people with dementia are subject to *high* rates of abuse and neglect by family caregivers (Mosqueda, et al., JAGS 2010)

- 47% of participants with dementia had been mistreated by their caregivers
 - 42% experienced psychological abuse
 - 10% physical abuse
 - 14% caregiver neglect
- Some experienced more than one type of mistreatment

The Policy Landscape

Federal law

- *Elder Justice Act* (2010) (*No appropriations to date*)
- *Older Americans Act* (2006) (reauthorization, 2011)
 - 2006 OAA elder justice provisions never funded or implemented
 - Scarce funding for OAA's other elder abuse related sections
- *Violence Against Women Act* (reauthorization, 2011)
 - \$4.2 million for elder abuse provision (coordinated community response teams)
- *Life Long Justice Legislative Map* with detailed info about all 3 laws: – Feb. 2011

State laws

- A great hodge podge; little consistency

Implementation; Regulation; Discretionary spending

- Elder abuse a low priority with low visibility across the board

Challenges to Advancing Elder Justice Policy

- Low Priority Issue; Invisible; Scant data
- Ageism, Apathy and Denial
- Complexity of the Issues; Message
- Chronic paucity of resources, *e.g.* for research like this
 - Est. 1 / 1000th of NIA funds go to EA research; Less at CDC
 - DOJ has only ongoing federal research program
 - Scant philanthropic, corporate or other funding

Opportunities to Advance Policy

- GAO study (expected release, February 2011)
- Elder Justice Roadmap/Concept Mapping underway
- Legislative opportunities in 2011
- Emerging advocacy efforts
- Increasing interest, awareness and visibility in some venues
- Efforts to translate research into practice, policy & change

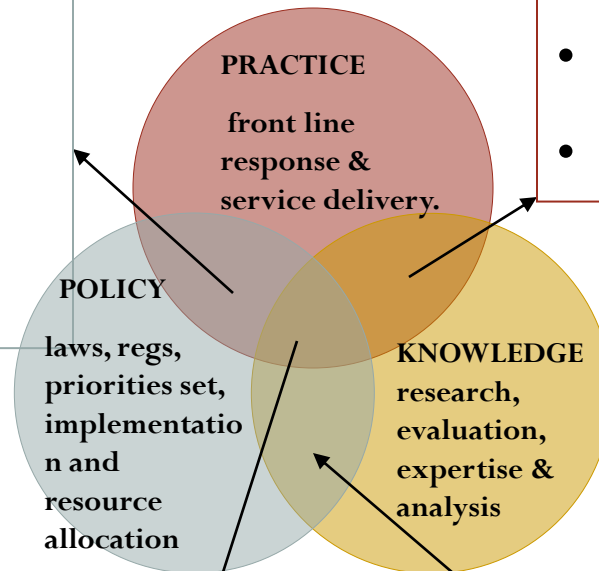
LOST AND FOUND IN TRANSLATION

INTERSECTION OF PRACTICE AND POLICY

- Fatality review teams
- LLJ APS survey (re APS data collection)

INTERSECTION OF PRACTICE AND RESEARCH/ KNOWLEDGE

- Bruising study
- Prosecutor data collection



INTERSECTION OF POLICY AND RESEARCH/KNOWLEDGE

- Incidence and Prevalence data
- Guidance to IRBs & researchers

**ALL 3 converge:
Collaborative efforts/teams
Centers; Advocacy;
Promoting public awareness**

Marie-Therese Connolly

Currently

- Senior Scholar, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (formerly a Wilson Center Fellow)
- Director, Life Long Justice, an elder justice initiative housed at Appleseed
- Consultant, including on DOJ Elder Justice Roadmap project

Previously

- Elder Justice and Nursing Home Initiative Coordinator, U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)
- Senate Special Committee on Aging, on detail in drafting of the Elder Justice Act