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Working with Healthcare Organizations to Support Elderly Female Victims of Abuse, **WHOSEFVA**

Country specific recommendations for Finland¹

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Agreed in an Advocacy Meeting in Helsinki 1 June 2018

RECOMMENDATION 1:

The topic of violence against older women, specifically the recognising, risk assessment and support of older female victims, should be included in the basic and advanced vocational training of social and health care professionals.

Rationale:

- The Istanbul convention, 2011 (Finland ratified 1 August 2015)
 - Article 15 Training of professionals
 - Article 23 Shelters (Finnish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs/THL: As part of the general development of shelter services, the knowledge and skills of shelter staff shall be increased regarding family violence as a phenomenon, crisis and trauma work as well as work with children, disabled and older persons in shelter settings).
- CM/Rec(2014)2 of the Council of Ministers – Protection from violence and abuse, Paragraph 18 (training recommendation)
- Obligation to notify increases the need for training
 - Act on Supporting the Functional Capacity of the Older Population and on Social and Health Services for Older Persons 980/2012 (25§ Informing of an older person's service needs) and Social Welfare Act 1301/2014 (48 § The obligatory informing duty of staff, starting from 01.1.2016)
 - The informing duty is also included in the Local Action Strategy of Ageing 2002 (MIPAA/RIS) (Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing).
- Training events of the WHOSEFVA project (autumn 2017 – January 2018 hospitals of Malmi ja Suursuo):
 - 134 employees participated in total, evaluation completed by 109 participants.
 - 89% of the participants (n=96) were health care professionals.
 - 66% of all the participants (n=72) and 81% of the health care professionals had never received training on elder abuse.

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- Training events (4) in April 2018:
 - 58 participants in total
 - 64% (n=34) had never received training on elder abuse, 36% (n=19) had received some (1 person did not answer.).

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Data on elder abuse should be systematically collected in social and health care services.

Rationale:

- Local Plan of Action on Ageing 2002 (MIPAA/RIS) (Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing): Paragraph 19 states that *Member States shall carry out an effective investigation into credible claims that violence or abuse against an older person has occurred, or when the authorities have reasonable grounds to suspect that such ill-treatment has occurred (no investigation when no suspicion raised)*
- Is Finland the safest country of the world for everyone? Report:
 - The report is part of the 100 Equality Acts programme of the National Council of Women of Finland and the Council for Gender Equality.
 - The Ministry of Interior Affairs published 31 May 2018 the following statement: Elder abuse perpetrated by those close to the elderly victims is believed to stay unknown to authorities due to shame, among other issues. The majority of homicides with female victims occur in relationships.
 - Violence perpetrated by those close to the victim is often hidden due to shame experienced by the victim. This concerns both women and older people.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

The situation of older women and particularly their risk of experiencing violence should be taken into account in the every-day work of authorities.

Rationale:

- The Local Plan of Action on Ageing 2002 (MIPAA/RIS) (Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing): Minimize the risks to older women of all forms of neglect, abuse and violence by increasing public awareness of, and protecting older women from, such as neglect, abuse and violence, especially in emergency situations.
- Report: Is Finland the safest county in the world for all?
 - the report (KPMG Oy Ab & WoM Oy 25.5.2018) studied safety from the point of view of different population groups in Finland
 - conclusion: older people, especially those with limited income and pensions create a particularly vulnerable group of citizens. Hence the safety of older people must be considered better in the future.
 - Specific issues noticed: The poverty and living alone of older women
- National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) Statistical report 42/2017: The majority of clients requiring regular home care are older women:



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65+	%	75+	%	85+	%
men	32,7	men	29,5	men	25,1
women	67,3	women	70,5	women	74,9

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Self-monitoring schemes should take into account the prevention of elder abuse and neglect by providing instructions on how to deal with suspected and real cases of elder abuse.

Rationale:

- The report of The National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health (Valvira): Abuse as noticed by employees working in units providing 24-hour elderly care, 2016:
 - The most common forms of abuse are failure to provide outdoor exercise, use of coarse, inappropriate or childish language, as well as bossiness, punishment or criticism. Also physical or sexual abuse was detected. It is mostly another employee and/or another resident who was named as the abuser.
 - In cases where a unit has developed an action model for elder abuse, the detected cases were dealt with more efficiency.
 - Shared instructions and rules known by all of staff make the prevention of and intervening in elder abuse easier.