

Perspectives of Cantonese-Speaking Older Immigrants in Toronto on Elder Abuse Risk Factors

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Agenda

- Introduction
- Research Methods
- Quantitative Data Analysis
- Qualitative Data Analysis
- Conclusion

Introduction

- 4.5% of Chinese elders aged 65 years of age and older in Canada experience abuse (Lai, 2011)
- Elder abuse within the Chinese community is underreported and underestimated due to a range of reasons including stigma and shame (ibid)
- Chinese elders are not well represented amongst users of long-term care facilities or home care (Koehn et al., 2013)
- Financial dependence, physical dependence, and emotional dependence are known risk factors for abuse for Chinese elders (Guruge et al., 2019, 2021)
- Limited research exists on elder abuse in Chinese immigrant communities

Research Methods

- Theoretical frameworks: intersectionality lens and ecosystemic framework
- Study design: mixed-methods study
- Setting: Greater Toronto Area (GTA)
- Recruitment strategies

Research Methods

- Data collection: 6 group interviews
- 13 risk factors examined:
 - Advanced age
 - Gender
 - Length of time in Canada
 - Sponsorship status
 - Lack of English knowledge
 - Income
 - Employment
 - Physical dependence
 - Emotional dependence
 - Financial dependence
 - Multi-generational co-residence
 - Social isolation
 - Racialized status

1. Advanced Age

In many cases, the oldest age groups are at greater risk for abuse than other age groups. In your community, how common is it for **advanced age** to increase older adults' risk of abuse?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very

How important is **age** in creating vulnerability to elder abuse in your community?

Not at all Important	Not very Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Extremely Important

Research Methods

- Data analysis:
 - SPSS was used for quantitative data;
 - Nvivo was used for qualitative data.

Demographics characteristics

Characteristics		Older men (n=21) frequency (%)	Older women (n=20) frequency (%)
Age	60-64	4 (19.0)	9 (45.0)
	65-75	14 (70.0)	9 (45.0)
	>75	3 (15.0)	2 (10.0)
Marital status	Single	2 (9.5)	2 (10.0)
	Married	18 (85.7)	14 (70.0)
	Widowed	0	2 (10.0)
	Divorced	1 (4.8)	2 (10.0)
Have children	No	1 (4.7)	3 (15.0)
	Yes	20 (95.3)	17 (85.0)
Year of arrival to Canada	Before 1980	5 (23.8)	4 (20.0)
	1980-1990	10 (47.6)	4 (20.0)
	1991-1999	6 (28.6)	12 (60.0)
Category of arrival to Canada	Skilled worker	8 (38.1)	3 (15.0)
	Dependent on skilled worker	0	4 (20.0)
	Sponsored by family members	4 (19.0)	6 (30.0)
	Investor immigrant	3 (14.3)	4 (20.0)
	International student	4 (19.0)	1 (5.0)
	Family reunification	0	2 (10.0)
	Temporary foreign worker	1 (4.8)	0
	Start-up VISA	1 (4.8)	0
Current status in Canada	Canadian citizen	20 (95.2)	14 (70.0)
	Permanent resident	1 (4.8)	6 (30.0)
Highest education	Primary school	0	3 (15.0)
	Some high school	2 (9.5)	5 (25.0)
	Completed high school	6 (28.6)	4 (40.0)
	College diploma	8 (38.1)	4 (20.0)
	Bachelor's degree	1 (4.8)	3 (15.0)
	Master's degree	4 (19.0)	1 (5.0)
Source of income	Wages or salaries	1 (4.8)	5 (25.0)
	Self-employment	0	2 (10.0)
	Old Age Security	17 (81.0)	9 (45.0)
	Canadian pension plan	20 (95.2)	8 (40.0)
	Other pensions	9 (42.9)	0
	Personal or family savings	12 (57.1)	6 (30.0)
	Investments	10 (47.6)	4 (20.0)
	No personal income	0	3 (25.0)
Proficiency in English language	Poorly	0	1 (5.0)
	Somewhat	6 (28.6)	13 (65.0)
	Very good	11 (52.4)	2 (10.0)
	Excellent	4 (19.0)	4 (20.0)

Quantitative data

► Table 2: Perceived frequency ratings of risk factors

Factor [Rated 0 to 4; where 0 indicates least frequent and 4 indicates the most frequent.]	Older women mean (SD)	Older men mean (SD)	Combined rating	t(39)	P	Cohen's D
Advanced age	2.15 (1.04)	1.90 (1.22)	2.02 (1.13)	0.693	0.246	0.22
Gender	2.40 (1.05)	1.95 (1.20)	2.17 (1.14)	1.273	0.105	0.40
Length of time in Canada	2.20 (1.06)	1.76 (0.89)	1.98 (0.99)	1.433	0.08	0.45
Sponsorship status	2.15 (1.14)	2.00 (0.89)	2.07 (1.01)	0.468	0.321	0.15
Lack of English knowledge	2.75 (1.02)	2.57 (1.17)	2.66 (1.09)	0.523	0.302	0.16
Income	2.40 (1.10)	2.38 (0.97)	2.39 (1.02)	0.059	0.477	0.02
Employment	2.75 (0.85)	2.10 (0.89)	2.41 (0.92)	2.410	0.01	0.75
Physical dependence on others	3.30 (0.87)	2.67 (1.16)	2.98 (1.06)	1.994	0.027	0.61
Emotional dependence on caregivers	3.16 (0.83)	2.38 (1.12)	2.75 (1.06)	2.507	0.008	0.48
Financial dependence	3.37 (0.90)	2.71 (1.01)	3.02 (1.00)	2.175	0.018	0.69
Multi-generational co-residence	2.58 (1.02)	2.33 (0.97)	2.45 (0.99)	0.781	0.220	0.25
Social isolation	2.84 (0.77)	2.52 (1.08)	2.68 (0.94)	1.085	0.143	0.34
Racialized status	1.95 (1.05)	2.10 (0.77)	2.02 (0.91)	-0.503	0.309	-0.16

Quantitative data

► Table 3: Perceived importance ratings of risk factors

Factor [Rated 0 to 4; where 0 indicates least frequent and 4 indicates the most frequent.]	Older women mean (SD)	Older Men Mean (SD)	Combined rating	t(39)	P	Cohen's D
Advanced age	2.75 (0.79)	2.48 (1.08)	2.61 (0.95)	0.932	0.179	0.28
Gender	2.75 (0.97)	1.95 (1.16)	2.34 (1.13)	2.395	0.011	0.75
Length of time in Canada	2.60 (1.00)	1.67 (1.07)	2.12 (1.12)	2.902	0.003	0.90
Sponsorship status	2.45 (1.10)	2.33 (0.91)	2.39 (1.00)	0.369	0.357	0.12
Lack of English knowledge	2.95 (0.95)	2.62 (1.02)	2.78 (0.99)	1.077	0.144	0.33
Income	3.05 (0.83)	2.57 (1.03)	2.80 (0.95)	1.647	0.054	0.51
Employment	2.80 (0.78)	2.38 (1.12)	2.59 (0.97)	1.406	0.084	0.43
Physical dependence on others	3.20 (0.95)	3.19 (0.60)	3.20 (0.78)	0.038	0.465	0.01
Emotional dependence on caregivers	3.16 (0.77)	2.62 (1.02)	2.88 (0.94)	1.997	0.033	0.60
Financial dependence	3.26 (0.73)	3.05 (0.81)	3.15 (0.77)	0.886	0.191	0.85
Multi-generational co-residence	2.89 (0.66)	2.67 (0.66)	2.78 (0.66)	1.095	0.140	0.33
Social isolation	2.95 (0.85)	2.71 (0.64)	2.83 (0.75)	0.971	0.169	0.32
Racialized status	2.45 (0.89)	2.14 (0.95)	2.29 (0.93)	1.063	0.147	0.34

Qualitative data

► Financial dependence

- When you are a senior over 60 years old, of course it is harder to find a job. It is very lucky if someone still hires you when you are in your 60s. But you also need to know yourself, know your own physical wellbeing. If you don't work, however, you maybe discriminated against at home or in the community. So, in a lot of situations, being able to earn money can make you stand on equal ground with others. [C1OW-2PH1-08]
- Financial reliance is the most important factor. If you have a lot of money, your children will come back to see you very often. (...) What I want to point out is that money cannot solve all problems, but you can't do anything without money. You can solve a lot of problems with money. You need people to take care of you? You can hire three or four people to do that. If you want someone to accompany you, people will come see you.... You can have a small party every day and a big party every week. Money can solve a lot of physical problems. For language-related issues, if you have money, you can hire a secretary. You won't have any inconvenience in life because there are someone working for you (C2OM-1PH1-04).

Qualitative data

► Physical dependency

► When you are in your 70s or 80s, everything starts to deteriorate, your health and other things. Once they start to deteriorate, if your English or finance are still OK, then everything is fine. But if both of those aspects are not OK, and you have to rely on the younger generation to take care of you, then your wellbeing will go downhill. If the younger generation is not considerate, then the older adult will get hurt. If they have a good attitude, they can go seek help, like CICS, Hong Fook. But if they choose to not disclose anything to other people, then they may suffer. So, age is important. At the beginning, when people first came to Canada, everyone is strong. They can live 20-30 years without any problem. But with age, they slowly become the one who needs to be taken care of. (C1OW-1PH1-02)

► Nowadays, a lot of the younger generations like to move very far away from the city to the North. If you move there, and if the older adult doesn't drive [you], you can't find anyone to talk to. If you walk on the street, in the rural side of Canada, even if you have a machine gun, you are not going to hurt anybody with it. You just sit at home the whole day, and it is so boring. [C2OM-1PH1-03]

Qualitative data

➤ Emotional dependence

- I have a friend, an older adult, whose son is their only family member. The person really relies on their son. Their son is like the whole world to them. But turns out, the son abuses the person. He said something like “I help you with everything” and then he took all the money away.... They trusted him because he was the only relative. [C2OM-3PH1-01]
- A lot of the young generation may not be able to arrange to have a meal with you every week. They have their own friends. In such cases, it's not that they don't care about you emotionally, or they are trying to neglect you. It is just that everyone is fighting for themselves in society. So, we all need to be understanding. [C2OM-3PH1-02]

Qualitative data

➤ Social isolation

➤ Even in nursing homes, if the family members go to visit the older adults often, the workers will not dare to hurt the older people. If no one visits you in 9 years, even if the workers hit you or pinch you, you cannot complain. If you complain, they will keep ignoring you, like refusing to lift you up from your bed. How likely are you going to complain? Are you going to sue them? Will they ever compensate you for hurting you? [C1OW-3PH1-03]

➤ I also know a person who cannot go back to their home country. The person stopped joining activities at the church. Then, the person feels like they have been cut off from society. For us, we can do everything through a message on apps like WhatsApp or WeChat. But this person doesn't know how to use smartphones. Even phone calls, they don't know how to do it. They still need to use keyboards. So, no doubt they will feel lonely. [C1OW-3PH1-

03]

Qualitative data

► Lack of English language skills

- If you don't have enough money, the government would subsidize you. Of course, it doesn't give you a very high standard of living. But do you know how to apply? It is us, Chinese people, who don't know how to apply. It is mostly because our English is not good enough. Westerners apply for a lot of benefits, and the government provides to them. [C2OM-3PH1-05]
- If older immigrants do not have a good grasp of English, even if they have the best consultant or lawyer or accountant, they can still be abused. Lawyers can also abuse them.... Independently knowing of things is very important. In Canada, the means of communication, the means of knowing, it's mostly English. [C1OW-3PH1-04]
- They work for Chinese people only. If you work for Chinese people, you get the lowest wage, yet the longest work hour. So, it is hard to improve your livelihood. If you don't know English, there is no other way.... (C2OM-2PH1-03).

Conclusion

- Financial dependence is an important risk factor that often intersects with other risk factors to produce vulnerability to elder abuse
- Policy recommendations include making OAS more available to immigrants and shortening the length of sponsorship for seniors.
- Free or reduced cost of public transportation for seniors is key to reducing their social isolation which is a key risk factor for elder abuse.
- Care-giving assistance and financial assistance to family members who are caregivers are critical considerations in order to support aging in place.
- Interventions to assess and address older immigrants' financial needs, physical dependence and potential exposure to elder abuse risk factors are key strategies to prevent elder abuse.

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