

The Carter-Jenkins Center

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ELDERLY GROWTH and ELDERLY ABUSE



by

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**(Much of the information here presented came from the web page of the World Health Organization,
the American Psychological Association and the National Center on Elder Abuse)**

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ELDERLY ABUSE: General considerations

- During the 20th century, the US population under age 65 tripled, but those 65 and older increased by a factor of 11. The number of seniors grew from 3.1 million in 1900 to 33.2 million in 1994. Plus, this number is expected to more than double by the middle of the next century, to 80 million people. By the year 2030, about one out of every five Americans, or 20% of our population, will be a senior citizen
- By the middle of 2025 there could be more persons who are elderly (65 or over) than young (14 or younger)!
- The United States is not unique in its growing share of seniors. In many other developed countries, including Italy, Japan, Germany, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, the proportion of seniors to the rest of the population is even greater

ELDERLY ABUSE: General considerations

The "oldest old" -- those aged 85 and over --, are the most rapidly growing elderly age group. Between 1960 and 1994, their numbers rose 274 %. In contrast, the elderly population in general rose 100 % while the entire U.S. population grew only 45 %. The "oldest old" numbered 3 million in 1994, making them 10 % of the elderly and just over 1 % of the total population. Thanks to the arrival of the baby boom generation, it is expected that the "oldest old" will number 19 million in 2050. That would make them 24 % of the elderly Americans and 5 % of all Americans

ELDERLY ABUSE: General considerations

- Once we reach age 65, we can expect to live 17 more years
- California has the largest *number* of elderly, but Florida has the highest *percentage* (19 % of residents are elderly)
- Most elderly men have a spouse for assistance, especially when health fails, most elderly women do not. 8 in 10 non-institutionalized elderly who lived alone (1993) were women
- As more people live longer, there may also be more who face chronic, limiting illnesses or conditions, such as arthritis, diabetes, osteoporosis, and senile dementia.
- The elderly demented become frequently aggressive compounding the above problem

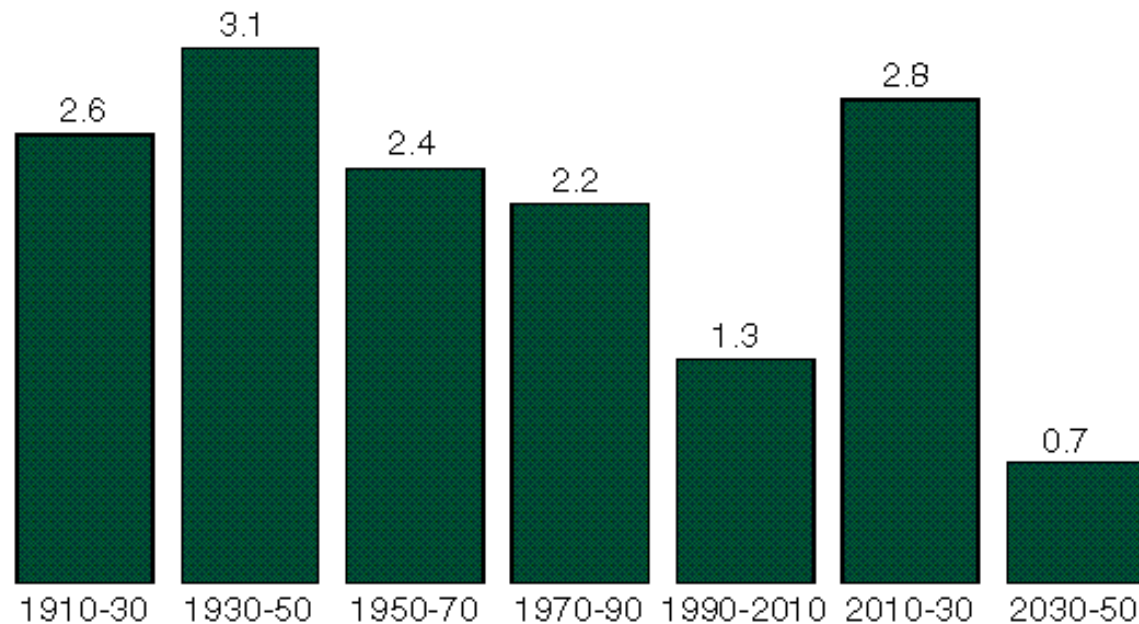
ELDERLY ABUSE: General considerations

- These and other medical conditions result in people becoming dependent on others for help in performing the activities of daily living**
- Most elderly people in the United States under the age of 75 are married and living with their spouse.**
- Given that women in general have a longer life expectancy, elderly men are twice as likely to be married as are elderly women.**
- Conversely, widowhood is much more common among elderly women**

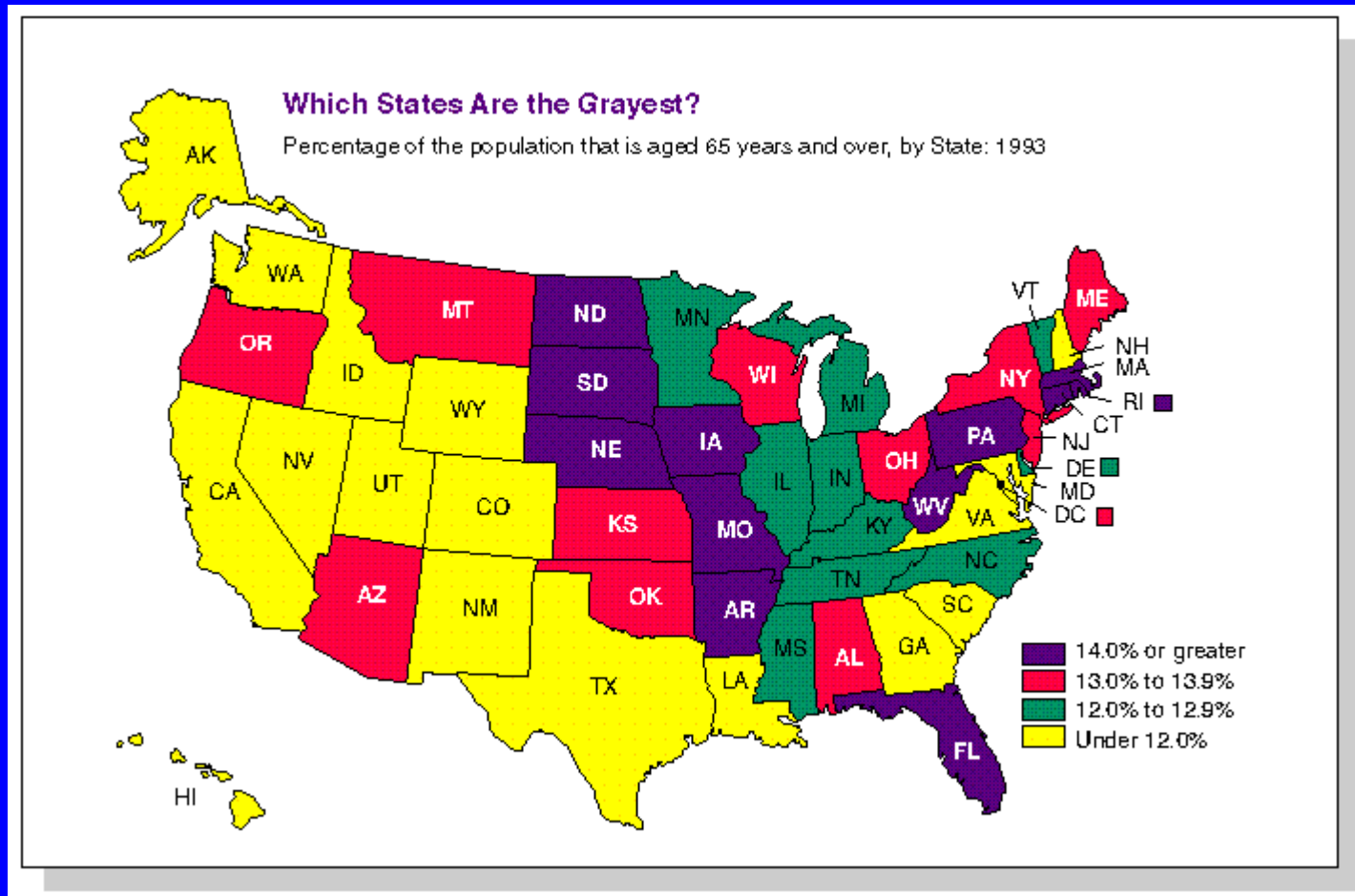
ELDERLY ABUSE: General considerations

Fifteen Years From Now, Elderly Population Growth Will Explode

Average annual growth rate (in percent) of the elderly population:
1910-30 to 2030-50



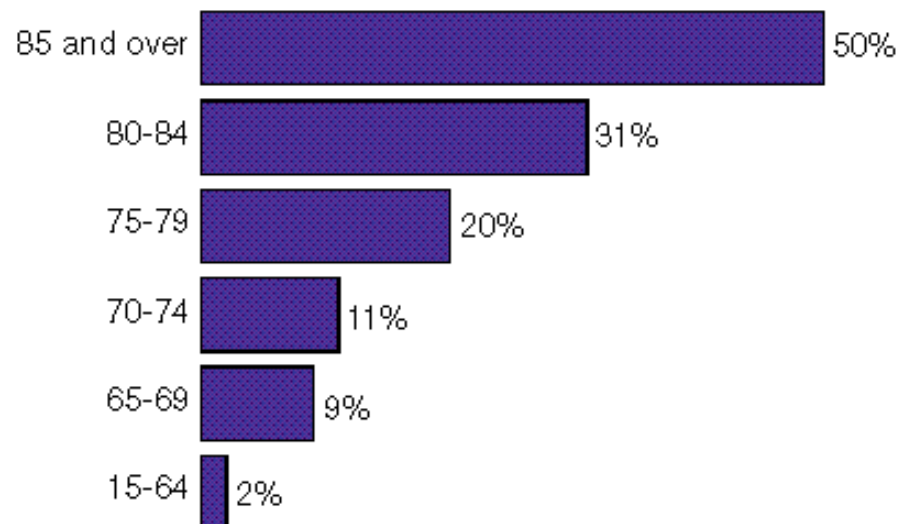
ELDERLY ABUSE: General considerations



ELDERLY ABUSE: General considerations

The Need for Personal Assistance With Everyday Activities Increases With Age

Percentage of persons needing assistance with everyday activities, by age: 1990-91
(Civilian noninstitutional population)



ELDERLY ABUSE: General considerations

- Every year 2.1 million older Americans suffer physical, psychological, sexual, financial abuse* and/or neglect
- Experts believe that for every case reported there are five unreported
- The eldest of our seniors (80 and up) are abused and neglected 2 to 3 times more than other senior citizens**
- 90% of elder abuse and neglect is done by family members, 2/3 are adult children and/or spouses. 42% of the murder victims over 60 were killed by their children. Spouses accounted for 24% of the family murders
- 21% of domestic elder abuse reports came from physicians, nurses etc. 9.4% from service providers and 14.9% by family members

* Estimated at 5 million/per year (Wasik, J. F(2000) The Fleecing of America's Elderly, Consumers Digest, March/April

** Bureau of Justice Statistics

ELDERLY ABUSE: General considerations

- China will have 300 million people 60 and older - equivalent to the whole population of the United States today - and the number of older citizens will keep climbing for a quarter-century after that**
- China, India, Japan, Indonesia and the United States are the five countries that most contributed to the growth of the world's elderly population between 1990 and 2000**
- The United States has only $\frac{1}{4}$ of the population of India (1.2 billions), yet it has more people ages 80 and over than India. By 2025 the US will have 80% more elderly than in 2000**
- By 2025 the elderly will nearly double all over the world (increasing 3 times more than the working age population)**
- Increasing numbers of people will have to care for very old, frail relatives**

ELDERLY ABUSE: General considerations

- Countries around the world are at very different stages in terms of their understanding, handling and in their national and local response to the care and protection of the old
- Cultural aberrations and customs compound the problem. In Tanzania for example, many elderly women are murdered, because they are suspected of being witches
- Nevertheless, the United Nations International Plan of Action to protect the elderly was adopted by all nations of the world in Madrid in 2002 *
- There is a growing interest in providing services for the abused elderly, similar to that offered to battered women, including emergency shelters and support groups

* http://www.who.int/ageing/projects/elder_abuse/en/

ELDERLY ABUSE: Its various forms

There are several types of abuse of the elderly:

- 1) Physical abuse includes hitting, biting, burning, pushing, any forms of beating, kicking, leading in extreme cases to broken bones or other severe lesions which are difficult to recover from for the elderly. Any form of inappropriate restrains can be included here, including chemical or physical restrains.
- 2) Psychological or emotional abuse which includes threats of any type, insults, intimidation, demeaning, calling names, restriction of movements, or interactions with others, etc

ELDERLY ABUSE: Its various forms

- 3) Financial abuse is an increasing problem that we will discuss later in great detail because it may easily go unnoticed thus leading to ruinous consequences for the elderly
- 4) Sexual abuse includes all kind of abusive sexual behaviors that are imposed on the elderly and that are not welcomed by them. It sometimes goes as far as forceful rape
- 5) Neglect (intentional or unintentional) includes the failure to provide water, food, medicines at the right doses, appropriate clothing, heating, hygiene etc

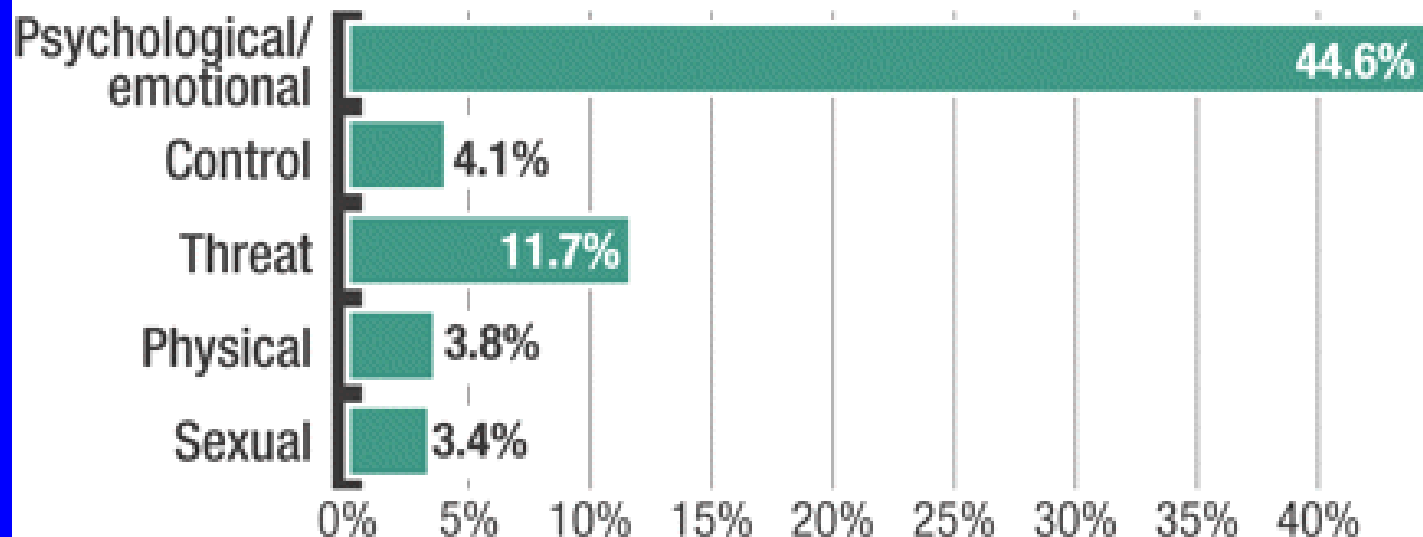
ELDERLY ABUSE: Index of suspicion

- **Delays in seeking assistance, bruises (different colors), pressure marks, abrasions, burns and even broken bones**
- **Withdrawal from usual activities, changes in alertness (sedatives being used inappropriately)**
- **Lesions around breast or genital areas in sexual abuse**
- **Sudden changes in financial situation**
- **Bedsore, poor hygiene, unusual weight loss, unattended medical needs, frequent visits to emergency rooms, etc**
- **Belittling, use of threats, excessive control (by a spouse for example), isolation from other relatives and friends**
- **Frequent arguments between caretaker and the elderly**
- **Seniors tend to suffer in silence Feel ashamed, fearful**
- **Forty three states require reporting of abuse or neglect**

Elderly women's abuse

Elderly Women Often Abused

Of 842 women aged 60 or over seen in primary care settings in three states, nearly half had experienced maltreatment of a psychological or emotional nature. Women who encountered one type of mistreatment were often found to have encountered other types as well.



Source: Bonnie Fisher, Ph.D., *The Gerontologist*, April 2006

FINANCIAL ABUSE OF THE ELDERLY

- Financial abuse is a rapidly increasing crime against the elderly
- Financial abuse occurs when an elderly person's resources such as cash, investments, bank accounts, property etc, are taken away by a person they trust (frequently relatives), for their own personal gain
- According to the 2000 census, the elderly between 65 and 74 have the highest net worth of any age. Those over 75 also tend to have money.
- They are easy targets because of dementia, chronic illness, needing help with daily living activities, isolation etc

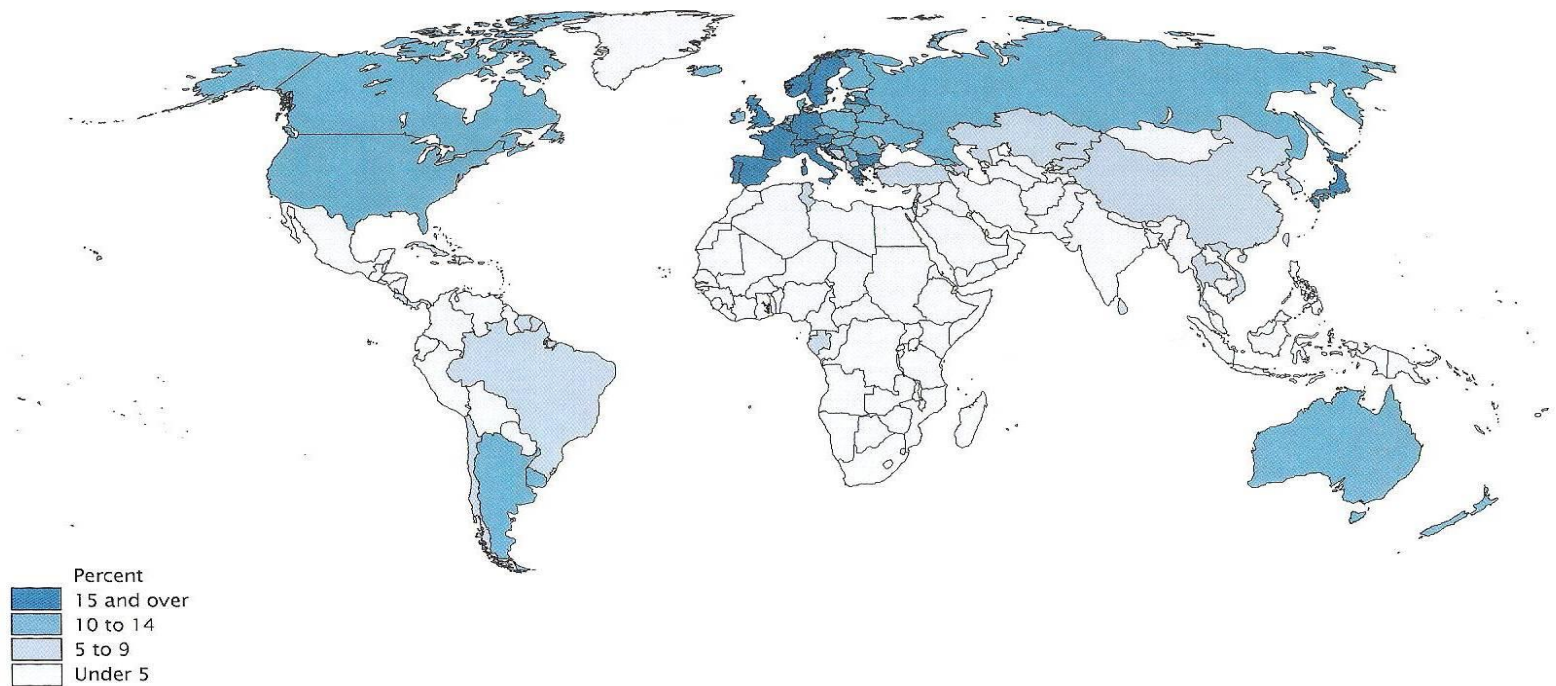
Percentage of population 65 and older

U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 4.

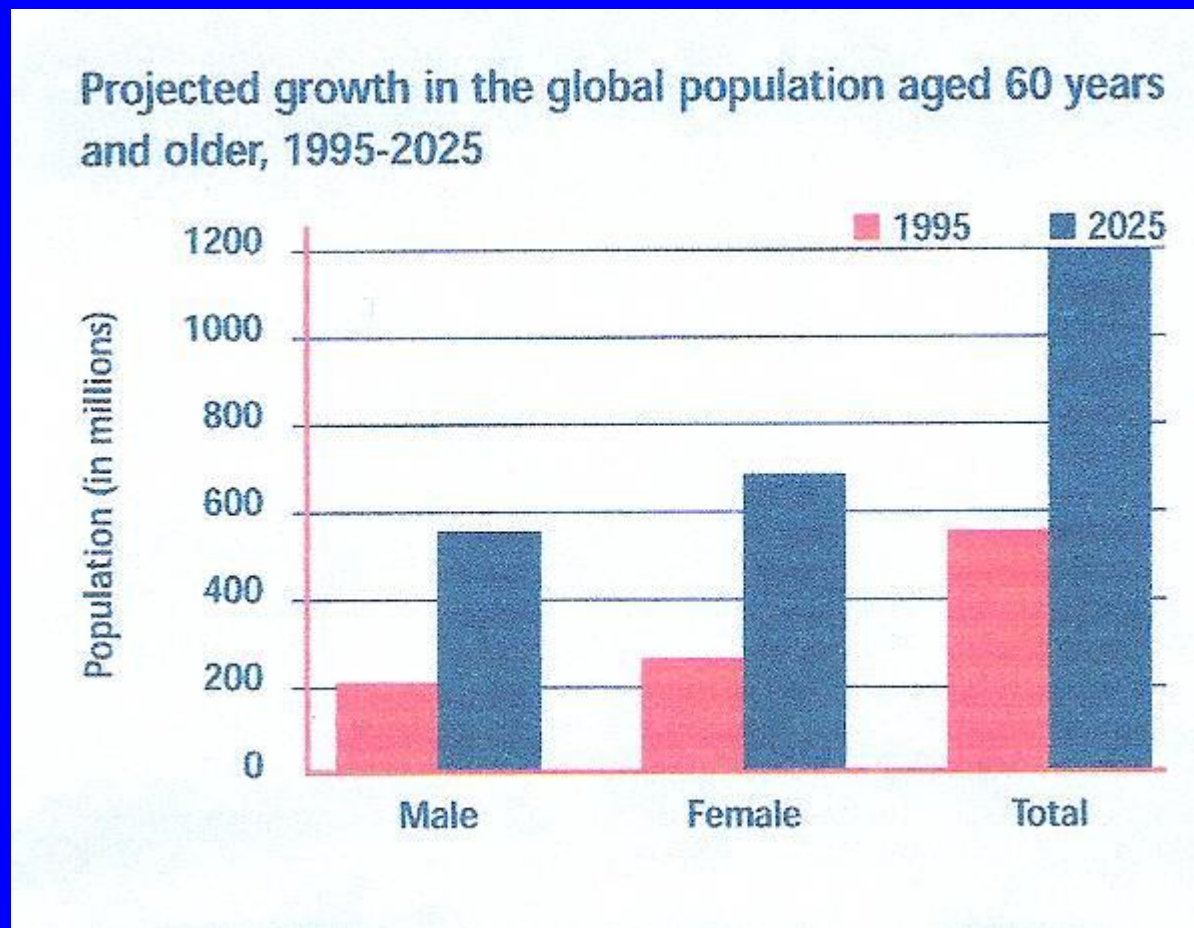
Percentage of Population Ages 65 and Older: 2000

(For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf1.pdf)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, International Data Base; Census 2000 Summary File 1.

Growth to 2025 of the population of 60 years and older



ELDERLY ABUSE: In Institutional Care

- Institutions include nursing homes, residential care, hospitals and day care facilities
- There is a vast literature in this area, but no national statistics, only local data from small studies
- Almost a third of nursing homes in the US were cited for abuse violations in a two year period ending in 1/1/2001*
- Such abuse includes physical restraints, over sedation, depriving them of dignity and choice over daily affairs and instances of insufficient care

* Special Investigation Division, Committee on Government Reform, U.S House of Representatives, July 30, 2001

ELDERLY ABUSE: In Institutional Care

- The abuse or neglect in institutional settings may be due to individual acts, institutional deficiencies and failures, or to both**
- The abuse may be committed by a staff member, another resident, a voluntary visitor, relatives or friends.**
- Remember that the abuse may be a continuation in the institution of the abuse at home by a relative**

ELDERLY ABUSE: In Institutional Care

- **Other factors mentioned**: problems with the quality and numbers of the staff, resistance to changes in geriatric medicine, deficient nursing care, insufficient training of staff and nurses, psychological problems among the staff, staff-residents interactions such as poor communications, aggressiveness on the part of residents, marked cultural differences, lack of basic privacy, dilapidated facilities, inadequate sensory stimulation, inadequate programming of the activities for the day, proneness to accidents due to poor vigilance of patients and/or training of the staff, high staff turnover (said to be sometimes a 100% a year), etc
- **Unfortunately though, the elderly may frequently not fare better in his own domestic setting**

ELDERLY ABUSE: In Institutional Care

- **A survey of Nursing Homes' personnel in one State disclosed that:**
 - **36% of nurses and staff reported witnessing at least one incident, of physical abuse by other staff, in the preceding year**
 - **10% admitted having committed at least one act of abuse themselves**
 - **81% witnessed psychological abuse in preceding year**
 - **40% admitted to have committed such an act**
 - **Mistreatment in Institutions is clearly much higher than is now believed**

ELDERLY ABUSE: In Domestic Settings

- 4 to 6% of the elderly experiences some form of abuse at home
- Older men suffer abuse in about the same proportion as women
- The abusers include spouses, boy/girlfriends, children, grandchildren, other relatives and non-relatives
- The rates of suicide in Europe for 75 years and older is three times higher than for the 15-24 years old group. It seem plausible, that elderly abuse and the helplessness that it leads to, may be one of the significant factors in this increase in the suicide rate among the elderly

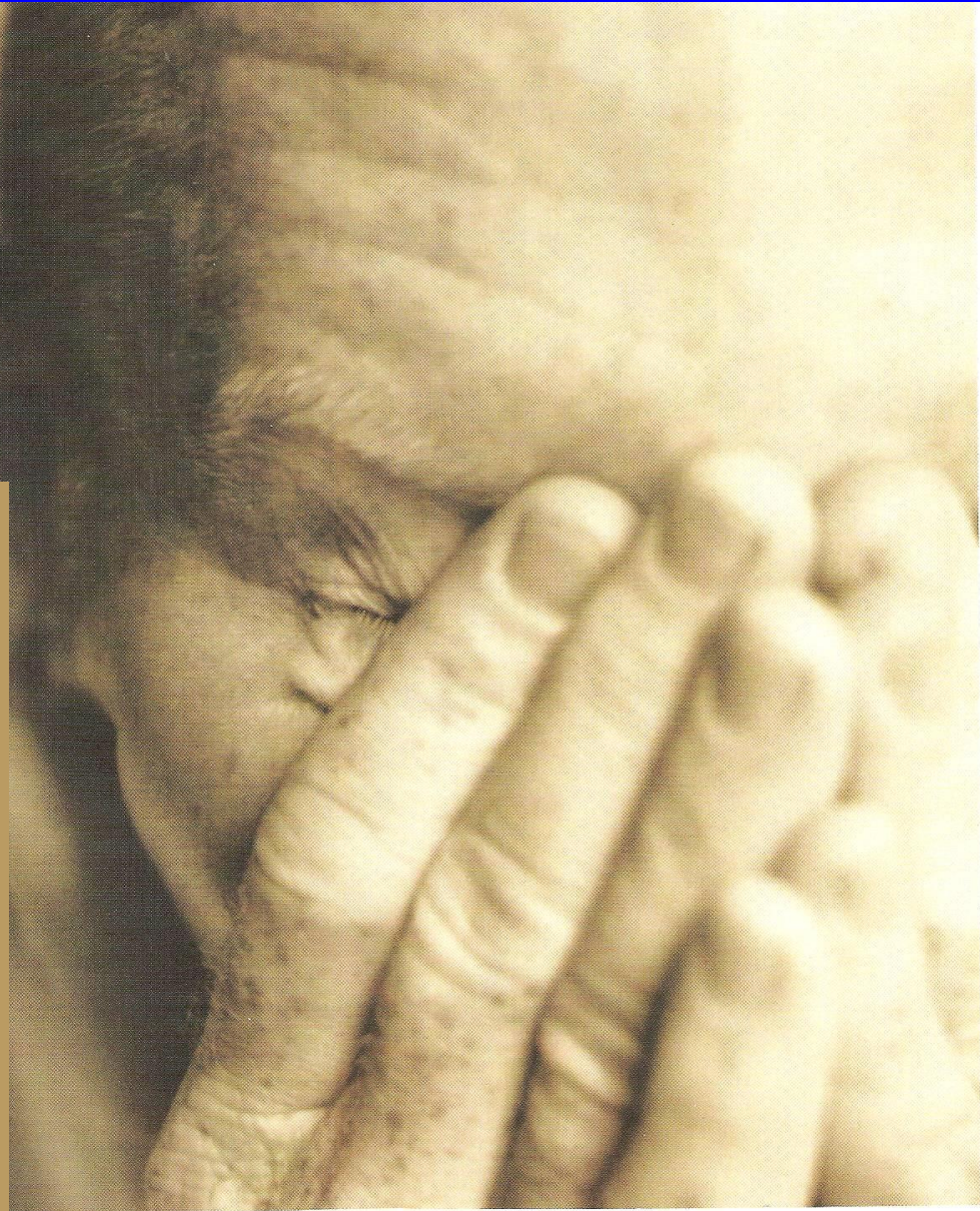
ELDERLY ABUSE: Conducting an examination

- Doctors generally not trained for this, hence no diagnosis**
- The patient must be interviewed alone. Ask directly about abuse (violence, restraints, neglect, financial, etc)**
- Interview the suspected abuser alone**
- Watch the relationship and behavior between patient and the suspected abuser**
- Examination to include medical, functional, cognitive and social factors**
- Document thoroughly including the patient's social networks both formal and informal**

The elderly

frequently feels disconnected, abandoned, mistreated and misunderstood. That, coupled with infirmity in him or his partner occasionally leads to suicide – homicides.

The greatest number of suicides-homicides occur in Florida, accounting for 12% of such events nationally



Places for HELP

National Center on Elder Abuse

Washington DC

Phone: 1-202-898-2583

www.elderabusecenter.org

Elder Care Locator

Provides places to refer the abused nationally

Phone: 1-800-677-1116

Area Agency on Aging

Check phone book

Adult Protective Services

Check phone Book

National Domestic Violence Hotline

Operates 24/7/365 days

Phone; 1-800-799-SAFE

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Questions?

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