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Awareness and Perceptions of Elder Abuse with Specific Attention to Financial Abuse – Survey Component

FINAL REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and Methodology

In May 2007 the Government of Canada created a National Seniors Council to give advice to Government on matters of national importance to seniors. One of the first areas identified by this group was combating elder abuse. In the Speech from the Throne delivered that fall, the Government announced its intention to address elder abuse. Budget 2008 committed \$13 million over three years to help seniors and others to recognize the signs and symptoms of elder abuse and to provide information on what support is available. Justice Canada retained EKOS Research Associates to conduct public opinion research (i.e., a telephone survey) on the Canadian public's awareness and perceptions of elder abuse with specific attention to financial abuse. The research was directed toward the general population as opposed to a targeted sub-sample of the population (such as seniors) for several reasons: 1) the focus is on raising awareness of all Canadians; 2) perpetrators of elder abuse are not always seniors themselves, nor are those who can assist seniors at risk; and 3) research seems to suggest that abuse does not always occur when seniors are isolated, and so it is important to pursue a wider awareness of the issue.

The study involved a 20-minute telephone survey with 3,002 respondents drawn from the general Canadian population. Respondents were 18 years of age and older, and were randomly selected (through random digit dialling). All provinces were sampled, and the survey was administered in both English and French.

Awareness and Perceptions of Elder Abuse

As a way of establishing the context for the remainder of the survey, respondents were first asked whether or not they had heard the term "elder abuse". Overall, more than eight in ten Canadians (82 per cent) say they are aware of the term, while fewer than one in five (18 per cent) said they had not heard of the term prior to the survey.

The survey went on to examine perceptions of the abuse of seniors. Respondents were asked to name, without prompting, the kinds of abuse they believe seniors might experience.¹ Physical abuse (e.g., hitting, spitting on) tops the list (mentioned by 49 per cent of respondents), followed by neglect (44 per cent), and emotional/psychological/verbal abuse (38 per cent). Financial abuse (e.g., forging a senior's signature) is also mentioned by a sizable proportion of the Canadian public (21 per cent).

¹ Before answering this question, respondents were first reminded that some elderly people live in institutions (e.g., nursing homes, senior's residences), while others live in the community either on their own or with family or friends.

In addition to naming the various kinds of abuse seniors may experience, respondents were asked to select (from a list) the type of abuse that they think is most commonly and least commonly experienced by seniors. The list included the following types of abuse: physical abuse, financial abuse, psychological/emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. When presented with these options, neglect is chosen as the most common type of abuse (36 per cent), followed by psychological/emotional abuse (26 per cent), and financial abuse (23 per cent). About one in ten (12 per cent) thinks physical abuse is the most common type of abuse perpetrated against seniors, and only one per cent picks sexual abuse as the most common form of elder abuse.

Using the same list, Canadians were also asked to name the type of elder abuse that they believe is *least* likely to occur. Given that it is ranked last in the hierarchy of *most* common forms of abuse, it is not unexpected to find sexual abuse at the top of the list of the *least* common types of abuse. In fact, Canadians overwhelmingly select sexual abuse as the least common form of abuse experienced by seniors (chosen by 75 per cent of respondents). All other forms of abuse are chosen as the least common by fewer than one in ten respondents.

When asked, unprompted, to consider the types of financial abuse that could be experienced by seniors, Canadians are able to generate a sizable list of potential abuses. At the top of the list were misusing a power of attorney for personal gain (mentioned by 22 per cent of respondents), and pressuring a senior to give money (19 per cent). Using a credit card or bank card without their knowledge, and telemarketing and letter scams were also seen as fairly common forms of financial abuse (16 per cent each).

Perceived Perpetrators of Elder Abuse

According to the latest police-reported data, seniors are most likely to be victimized by someone they know.² Results from this survey seem to reflect this finding. Indeed, when asked, without prompting, who they pictured as being responsible for elder abuse, very few think of someone who is not at least acquainted with the senior (only eight per cent say “stranger”). Overall, two main categories of perpetrators come to mind: a family member other than a spouse (62 per cent) and paid caregivers in institutions (46 per cent).

Respondents were also asked to select (from a list) the category of people they think are most and least likely to abuse a senior. The list included the following categories of individuals: spouse, family member (not including a spouse), friend, neighbour, paid caregiver, service professional³ and stranger. Similar to the results of the open-ended exercise, family members other than spouses are selected most frequently (42 per cent), followed by paid caregivers (29 per cent). A few others selected stranger (ten per

² This information is drawn from the 2004 Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey. See the Statistics Canada publication, *Seniors as Victims of Crime 2004 and 2005*, for more information.

³ For example, lawyer, banker, insurance representative, doctor etc.

cent), spouse (seven per cent), or service professional (six per cent) as the most likely culprits. Almost no one names a friend or neighbour (one per cent each) as being the most likely to abuse a senior.

Using the same list, Canadians were also asked to name the category of individual that they believe is *least* likely to abuse a senior. Given that they are rated as the groups *most* likely to engage in elder abuse, it is not unexpected to find that very few name another family member (ten per cent) or a paid caregiver (six per cent) as the individuals *least* likely to abuse a senior. Instead, Canadians are most likely to consider a spouse (26 per cent) to be the *least* likely to engage in this activity – even though recent police data suggests that spouses are among the groups more likely to be involved in the victimization of seniors.⁴ Another one in six (17 per cent) felt that a stranger is the least likely culprit. All other categories of individuals are considered the least likely to abuse a senior by about one in ten respondents (15 per cent service professionals, 12 per cent friends, and ten per cent neighbours).

Referring to the same list of individuals, respondents were asked to name who they thought would be the most and least likely to *financially* abuse a senior. In this context, a family member (not including a spouse) is once again named as the most probable perpetrator (61 per cent). Unlike elder abuse in general, however, no other category of individual is considered a likely threat by a significant proportion of the population (i.e., the category of family members is selected over even its closest rival, strangers, by a margin of more than five to one). Indeed, no other category is named by more than about one in ten Canadians.

Perceptions of Seniors Versus Elders

The survey also examined broader perceptions of what it means to be a “senior” versus an “elder” in Canadian society, and whether these definitions influence perceptions of this increasingly important age demographic.

Respondents were asked at what age they consider a person becomes a senior. A majority of respondents (57 per cent) feel that one becomes a senior at age 65, in alignment with the Statistics Canada definition,⁵ as well as the generally accepted age of retirement. However, one in four (24 per cent) believe that a person is a senior before the age of 65, while roughly one in ten (11 per cent) put the age at 75 or older.

Respondents were then asked if using the term “elder” instead of “senior” would change their response about age threshold. The majority of respondents (58 per cent) say there would be no change, however, almost four in ten (38 per cent) say it would affect their answer.

⁴ See the Statistics Canada publication, Seniors as Victims of Crime 2004 and 2005, for more information.

⁵ Statistics Canada, *Overview 2007*. http://www41.statcan.gc.ca/2007/70000/ceb70000_000-eng.htm

Respondents who said the term “elder” would change their answer to the previous question were then asked to specify the age at which they think a person becomes an elder. Interestingly, results for this question skewed slightly older than the results for the previous question about seniors: more than one-third of these respondents (34 per cent) put the age at 75 and above (compared to 11 per cent when asked about seniors).

Respondents were then asked, unprompted, to describe the differences between a senior and an elder. In keeping with the results of the earlier questions, a plurality of respondents (37 per cent) sees no difference between the two. Among those who do see a difference, results reveal mixed/negative views of elders relative to seniors. About one in ten associate a lack of autonomy (12 per cent) and physical limitations (11 per cent) with being an elder. Other respondents were more neutral in their assessments: 21 percent characterize the difference as one of age only (i.e., senior is an age distinction (six per cent), elder is an age distinction (six per cent), elder is older than a senior (six per cent), or a question of age (three per cent)). Some respondents offered a more positive view of elders: nine per cent see elders as being respected and experienced individuals.

Sources of Information About Financial Abuse of Seniors

The survey also examined potential and preferred sources of information on the financial abuse of seniors.

Respondents were asked to name – without prompting – the sources they would turn to get information about the financial abuse of seniors. The answers provided covered a broad range of resources. One in five (20 per cent) say they would go to the Internet for information about financial abuse of seniors, one in six (17 per cent) cite the government as their primary information source, and 16 per cent mentioned the police. One in four respondents (23 per cent) would seek advice from some kind of professional (e.g., doctor (six per cent), lawyer (six per cent), financial advisor (five per cent), or social worker (six per cent)), while ten per cent indicated they would turn to community-based organizations for help.

In addition to asking Canadians about the different sources they would consider consulting for information on the financial abuse of seniors, respondents were also asked (from a list of options) their preferred format in seeking this type of information. A majority of Canadians overall (55 per cent) prefer to access such information online, although this drops to only four in ten (39 per cent) of those 65 and over. About one in six (16 per cent) selected face-to-face presentations or seminars as their preferred method to find information about the abuse of seniors, and one in five cited media as a preferred delivery method (12 per cent for television and eight per cent for newspapers).

Profile of Caregivers

In addition to gathering views on elder abuse, the survey also sought to develop a profile of individuals responsible for caring for elderly persons (age 65 or older). Respondents were asked if they currently provide care to an elderly household member who is 65 years of age or older. An overwhelming

majority (93 per cent) say they are not caring for an elderly household member, while six percent of respondents say that they are.

Respondents who said they currently provide care for an elderly household member were asked how many hours of care per week they provide. One in five (21 per cent) spend less than five hours per week caring for an elderly household member, however, a large proportion of these respondents say they spend five to ten hours per week (39 per cent), or 11 hours or more (40 per cent) providing care for an elder in their home.

Respondents were also asked to specify the nature of the relationship they have with the elder to whom they are providing care. Just over half of these respondents (53 per cent) indicate they are caring for a parent (their own or their spouse's), and about one in eight are caring for a grandparent (13 per cent), or for their spouse/partner (13 per cent).

Respondents were also asked if they currently provide care to an elderly family member (aged 65 years or older) who is not living in their household. Results suggest that Canadians are more likely to be providing care for an elderly person outside of the home rather than in their home (14 per cent vs. six per cent inside the home). Nonetheless, a clear majority of respondents (84 per cent) say they are not providing care for an elderly family member outside their home.

Respondents who said they currently provide care for an elderly family member outside their household were asked how many hours of care per week they provide. Results suggest that a majority of these respondents (51 per cent) spend less than five hours per week providing care to an elderly family member outside their home, however, others spend a fairly significant portion of their time caring for an elderly family member living outside their home: 36 per cent say they provide between five and ten hours per week, and 13 per cent devote 11 hours or more per week caring for an elder who does not reside with them.

These respondents were also asked to specify the nature of the relationship they have with the elder to whom they are providing care. The majority (60 per cent) indicate they are caring for a parent (their own or their spouse's), while one in five (19 per cent) are caring for a grandparent.

Study findings are described in more detail in the remainder of this report.

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SOMMAIRE

Aperçu général et méthodologie

En mai 2007, le gouvernement du Canada a créé le Conseil national des aînés afin qu'il lui procure des conseils sur les enjeux d'importance nationale pour les aînés. L'un des premiers domaines retenu par le Conseil réside dans la lutte contre les mauvais traitements envers les aînés. Dans le discours du trône prononcé l'automne suivant, le gouvernement a fait connaître son intention de se préoccuper de la violence faite aux personnes âgées. Dans le budget des dépenses de 2008, des crédits de 13 millions de dollars étalés sur trois ans ont été prévus afin d'aider entre autres les aînés à reconnaître les signes et symptômes de la violence envers les personnes âgées et de fournir de l'information sur le soutien qui est offert. Justice Canada a confié aux Associés de recherche EKOS le soin d'effectuer une recherche d'opinion publique (au moyen d'un sondage téléphonique) sur la sensibilisation et les perceptions de la population canadienne en matière de mauvais traitements envers les aînés, en particulier en ce qui concerne leur exploitation financière. La recherche s'adressait à l'ensemble de la population plutôt qu'à un sous-échantillon particulier (comme celui des aînés), et ce pour diverses raisons : 1) l'objectif est de mieux sensibiliser tous les Canadiens; 2) ceux qui maltraitent les aînés ne sont pas toujours eux-mêmes des aînés, non plus que les personnes en mesure d'aider les aînés à risque; 3) la recherche semble laisser entendre que la violence ne vise pas toujours des aînés isolés et il est donc important de sensibiliser le plus de gens possible au problème.

L'étude comportait un sondage téléphonique de 20 minutes auprès de 3 002 répondants provenant de l'ensemble de la population canadienne. Ces répondants, âgés de 18 ans et plus, ont été sélectionnés au hasard (au moyen de la composition téléphonique aléatoire). Toutes les provinces ont été échantillonnées et le sondage s'est déroulé dans les deux langues officielles.

Sensibilisation à la violence faite aux personnes âgées et perceptions

Afin de situer le reste du sondage dans son contexte, on a d'abord demandé aux répondants s'ils avaient déjà entendu l'expression « mauvais traitements envers les aînés ». Dans l'ensemble, plus de huit Canadiens sur dix (82 p. 100) se disent au courant de l'expression tandis que moins d'une personne sur cinq (18 p. 100) affirme ne l'avoir jamais entendue avant le sondage.

On a voulu ensuite étudier la perception qu'on peut avoir des mauvais traitements envers les aînés. Les répondants étaient invités à nommer, sans aide, les formes de violence que les aînés sont susceptibles de subir⁶. La violence physique (p. ex., se faire frapper, cracher dessus) arrive en tête

⁶ Avant qu'ils ne répondent à cette question, on rappelait d'abord aux répondants que les aînés peuvent vivre dans un établissement (centre de soins infirmiers, résidence pour personnes âgées) ou bien dans la collectivité, soit chez eux ou avec des membres de la famille ou des amis.

(mentionnée par 49 p. 100 des répondants), suivie par la négligence (44 p. 100) et la violence émotive, psychologique ou verbale (38 p. 100). L'exploitation financière (p. ex., contrefaire la signature d'un aîné) est aussi mentionnée par une assez importante proportion de la population canadienne (21 p. 100).

Outre la mention des formes de violence que les aînés sont susceptibles de subir, les répondants devaient choisir (d'après une liste) les mauvais traitements à l'égard des aînés qui leur semblent les plus ainsi que les moins répandus. La liste comprenait les formes de violence suivantes : violence physique, exploitation financière, violence psychologique ou émotive, violence sexuelle et négligence. Comprise dans ces options, la négligence est retenue comme le mauvais traitement le plus répandu (36 p. 100), suivie de la violence psychologique ou émotive (26 p. 100) et de l'exploitation financière (23 p. 100). Ils ne sont environ qu'un répondant sur dix (12 p. 100) à penser que la violence physique est le mauvais traitement le plus commun à être infligé aux aînés, et seulement 1 p. 100 à répondre que la forme de violence la plus courante est la violence sexuelle.

Toujours au moyen de cette liste, on a également demandé aux Canadiens de nommer le mauvais traitement le *moins* susceptible, selon eux, d'être infligé aux personnes âgées. Étant donné sa dernière place dans la hiérarchie des mauvais traitements les *plus* répandus, on ne saurait s'étonner de voir la violence sexuelle en tête de liste des mauvais traitements les *moins* répandus. En fait, les Canadiens choisissent par une majorité écrasante la violence sexuelle comme la forme de violence la moins commune infligée aux aînés (75 p. 100 des répondants). Tout autre mauvais traitement est choisi comme le moins répandu par au moins un répondant sur dix.

Invités à préciser spontanément les sortes d'exploitation financière que peuvent subir les aînés, les Canadiens parviennent à dresser une liste assez impressionnante d'abus potentiels. On y voit tout d'abord l'utilisation à son profit personnel de son pouvoir de mandataire (mentionnée par 22 p. 100 des répondants) et les pressions exercées pour obtenir de l'argent d'un aîné (19 p. 100). L'utilisation d'une carte de crédit ou de débit à l'insu de son propriétaire et l'escroquerie par télémarketing et correspondance sont aussi perçues comme des formes assez courantes d'exploitation financière (16 p. 100 chacune).

Auteurs présumés de la violence envers les aînés

D'après les dernières données policières, les aînés sont surtout susceptibles d'être la victime de quelqu'un de leur entourage⁷. Les résultats du présent sondage semblent le confirmer. Effectivement, invités à dire, sans aide, qui leur semblent être des auteurs possibles de mauvais traitements infligés aux personnes âgées, très peu de répondants croient qu'il peut s'agir de parfaits inconnus (seulement 8 p. 100 disent « un étranger »). De façon générale, deux grandes catégories d'agresseurs viennent à l'esprit : un autre membre de la famille que le conjoint ou la conjointe (62 p. 100) et des soignants rémunérés dans un établissement (46 p. 100).

⁷ Ces renseignements proviennent de la Déclaration uniforme de la criminalité (DUC2) de 2004. Pour en savoir davantage, consulter la publication de Statistique Canada, Les aînés victimes d'actes criminels en 2004 et 2005.

Les répondants devaient aussi sélectionner (d'après une liste) la catégorie de personnes qui leur paraissent être les plus et les moins susceptibles de maltraiter un aîné. La liste comportait les catégories suivantes : conjoint, membre de la famille (autre que conjoint), ami, voisin, soignant rémunéré, fournisseur de services professionnels⁸ et étranger. Comme dans le cas des réponses spontanées, les agresseurs les plus plausibles seraient les membres de la famille autres que le conjoint ou la conjointe (42 p. 100), après quoi viennent les soignants rémunérés (29 p. 100). Quelques répondants ont sélectionné un étranger (10 p. 100), le conjoint ou la conjointe (7 p. 100) ou un fournisseur de services professionnels (6 p. 100) comme agresseurs les plus plausibles. À peu près personne n'a choisi un ami ou un voisin (1 p. 100 respectivement) comme personne la plus susceptible de maltraiter un aîné.

À l'aide de la même liste, les Canadiens étaient aussi invités à nommer la catégorie de personnes leur paraissant les *moins* susceptibles de maltraiter un aîné. Puisqu'ils sont mentionnés comme groupes les *plus* susceptibles d'agir avec violence à l'égard des personnes âgées, il n'est pas étonnant de constater que très peu de répondants mentionnent un autre membre de la famille (10 p. 100) ou un soignant rémunéré (6 p. 100) comme personnes les *moins* susceptibles de maltraiter un aîné. Les Canadiens sont plutôt portés à penser que le conjoint ou la conjointe (26 p. 100) est la personne la *moins* susceptible d'user de violence – bien que d'après les dernières données sur la criminalité, les conjoints fassent partie des groupes plus susceptibles que d'autres de maltraiter les aînés⁹. Ils sont encore un sur six (17 p. 100) à penser qu'un étranger est le moins susceptible de ce genre de violence. Toutes les autres catégories de personnes sont perçues comme les moins susceptibles de maltraiter un aîné par environ un répondant sur dix (15 p. 100 pour un fournisseur de services professionnels, 12 p. 100 pour un ami ou une amie et 10 p. 100 pour un voisin ou une voisine).

D'après la même liste, les répondants devaient nommer les personnes qui, à leur avis, seraient les plus et les moins susceptibles d'exploiter *financièrement* un aîné. Dans ce contexte, un membre de la famille (autre que le conjoint ou la conjointe) est de nouveau mentionné comme auteur le plus probable de cette forme de violence (61 p. 100). Au contraire de ce qu'il en est de façon générale pour les mauvais traitements envers les aînés, aucune autre catégorie de personnes n'apparaît aux yeux d'une partie importante de la population comme susceptible de constituer une menace (i.e., la catégorie des membres de la famille est retenue, en regard de sa plus proche rivale, celle des étrangers, par une marge de plus de cinq à un). En fait, aucune autre catégorie n'est mentionnée par plus d'un Canadien sur dix environ.

⁸ Par exemple, avocat, directeur de banque, représentant d'assurance, médecin, etc.

⁹ Pour en savoir davantage, consulter la publication de Statistique Canada, Les aînés victimes d'actes criminels en 2004 et 2005.

Perception des aînés et des personnes âgées

Le sondage cherchait aussi à connaître la perception qu'on peut avoir d'un « aîné » par opposition à une « personne âgée » dans la société canadienne, et si les définitions qu'on en donne influent sur la perception qu'on a des membres ce groupe d'âges qui gagne en importance.

On a demandé aux répondants à quel âge, à leur avis, on devient un aîné. Majoritairement (57 p. 100), ils estiment qu'on devient aîné à 65 ans, conformément à la définition de Statistique Canada¹⁰, ce qui correspond aussi à l'âge habituel de la retraite. Cependant, pour un répondant sur quatre (24 p. 100), on devient un aîné avant d'atteindre 65 ans tandis qu'environ un répondant sur dix (11 p. 100) situe cet âge à 75 ans et plus.

Les répondants devaient ensuite dire si l'emploi de l'expression « personne âgée » au lieu d'« aîné » les ferait changer d'avis quant à l'âge butoir. Si la majorité des répondants (58 p. 100) affirment que cela ne changerait rien, ils sont près de quatre sur dix (38 p. 100) à dire qu'ils répondraient différemment.

Les personnes ayant répondu que l'expression « personne âgée » aurait pour effet de modifier leur réponse à la question précédente étaient interrogés sur l'âge auquel on devient une personne âgée. Fait intéressant, les résultats s'écartent des précédents au sujet des aînés en donnant un âge un peu plus avancé : plus du tiers de ces répondants (34 p. 100) situent l'âge butoir à 75 ans et plus (comparativement à 11 p. 100 lorsqu'il s'agit de l'âge d'un aîné).

Les répondants étaient ensuite invités à décrire, spontanément, les différences entre un aîné et une personne âgée. Conformément aux réponses obtenues aux questions précédentes, une majorité relative de répondants (37 p. 100) n'y voient aucune différence. Parmi ceux qui perçoivent des différences, les résultats révèlent des points de vue mitigés ou négatifs à l'égard des personnes âgées relativement aux aînés. Ils sont environ un sur dix à associer le manque d'autonomie (12 p. 100) et les limites physiques (11 p. 100) au fait d'être une personne âgée. Les autres répondants se montrent plus neutres dans leur évaluation : 21 p. 100 croient que la différence se résume à une question d'âge (i.e., un aîné se distingue par son âge (6 p. 100), une personne âgée se distingue par son âge (6 p. 100), une personne âgée est plus vieille qu'un aîné (6 p. 100) et c'est une question d'âge (13 p. 100)). Quelques répondants expriment une opinion plus positive des personnes âgées : 9 p. 100 les considèrent comme des personnes respectées et expérimentées.

¹⁰ Statistique Canada, *Aperçu 2007*. http://www41.statcan.gc.ca/2007/70000/ceb70000_000-fra.htm

Sources d'information sur l'exploitation financière des aînés

Le sondage portait également sur les sources potentielles et préférées d'information sur l'exploitation financière des aînés.

Les répondants étaient invités à nommer – sans aide – les sources qu'ils consulteraient pour se renseigner sur l'exploitation financière des aînés. D'après les réponses, ces sources sont très variées. Les répondants sont un sur cinq (20 p. 100) à dire qu'ils chercheraient dans Internet de l'information sur l'exploitation financière des aînés, un sur six (17 p. 100) à mentionner le gouvernement comme leur principale source d'information et 16 p. 100 à mentionner la police. Le quart des répondants (23 p. 100) demanderaient l'avis d'un membre d'une profession libérale (p. ex., médecin (6 p. 100), avocat (6 p. 100), conseiller financier (5 p. 100) ou travailleur social (6 p. 100)), tandis que 10 p. 100 s'adresseraient à un organisme communautaire.

Outre la question sur les sources d'information qu'ils consulteraient au sujet de l'exploitation financière des aînés, les répondants devaient aussi préciser (d'après une liste d'options) sous quelle forme ils préféreraient obtenir cette information. De façon générale, la majorité des Canadiens (55 p. 100) préféreraient obtenir cette information en ligne, bien que la proportion se réduise à seulement quatre sur dix (39 p. 100) des répondants âgés de 65 ans et plus. Ils sont environ un répondant sur six (16 p. 100) à choisir les présentations de vive voix ou les colloques comme leur façon préférée de se renseigner sur les mauvais traitements envers les aînés, et un sur cinq à citer les médias en tant que mode de prestation préféré (12 p. 100 la télévision et 8 p. 100 les journaux).

Profil des soignants

À part de saisir l'opinion sur la violence faite aux personnes âgées, le sondage avait aussi pour but de tracer le profil des personnes qui procurent des soins aux personnes âgées (65 ans et plus). On a voulu savoir des répondants s'ils offraient au moment du sondage des soins à un membre de leur ménage âgé de 65 ans ou plus. Par une majorité écrasante (93 p. 100) ils ont répondu ne pas fournir de soins à un membre plus âgé de leur ménage tandis que 6 p. 100 ont dit le faire.

Ceux qui ont affirmé qu'ils prenaient soin d'une personne âgée faisant partie de leur ménage étaient invités à préciser le nombre d'heures qu'ils y consacrent par semaine. Ces répondants sont un sur cinq (21 p. 100) à passer moins de cinq heures par semaine à soigner un membre âgé de leur ménage, mais une forte proportion d'entre eux disent consacrer de cinq à dix heures par semaine (39 p. 100) ou onze heures et plus (40 p. 100) à fournir des soins à une personne âgée faisant partie de leur ménage.

On a également demandé aux répondants quelle était la nature de leur relation avec la personne âgée dont ils s'occupent. Un peu plus de la moitié de ces répondants (53 p. 100) disent qu'ils s'occupent d'un parent (leur père ou mère ou celui ou celle de leur conjoint(e)) et un sur huit environ s'occupent d'un grand-père ou d'une grand-mère (13 p. 100) ou de leur conjoint(e) ou partenaire (13 p. 100).

Une autre question consistait à savoir des répondants si, au moment du sondage, ils procuraient des soins à un membre âgé de leur famille (65 ans et plus) mais qui n'habitait pas avec eux. Il ressort des résultats que les Canadiens sont plus susceptibles de procurer des soins à une personne âgée qui ne vit pas dans leur foyer mais plutôt ailleurs (14 p. 100 contre 6 p. 100 à une personne âgée qui vit chez eux). Néanmoins, une nette majorité de répondants (84 p. 100) disent ne pas fournir de soins à une personne âgée de leur famille qui vit ailleurs que chez eux.

Aux répondants qui ont dit procurer, au moment du sondage, des soins à une personne âgée de leur famille mais qui n'habite pas dans leur foyer, on a demandé combien d'heures par semaine ils consacrent à ces soins. Les résultats montrent qu'une majorité de ces répondants (51 p. 100) consacrent moins de cinq heures par semaine à s'occuper d'une personne âgée, membre de leur famille, qui n'habite pas chez eux, mais les autres consacrent une partie assez importante de leur temps à un membre de la famille qui est âgé et vit ailleurs que chez eux : 36 p. 100 disent consacrer entre cinq et dix heures par semaine à cette personne âgée qui n'habite pas chez eux tandis que 13 p. 100 consacrent à ces soins onze heures ou plus par semaine.

Ces répondants étaient aussi invités à préciser la nature de leur relation avec la personne âgée à qui ils procurent des soins. Pour la majorité (60 p. 100), il s'agit d'un parent (leur père ou mère ou celui ou celle de leur conjoint(e)), alors qu'ils sont un sur cinq à s'occuper d'un grand-père ou d'une grand-mère.

Les résultats détaillés de l'étude sont exposés dans les pages suivantes du présent rapport.

Nom du fournisseur : Les Associés de recherche EKOS
N° du contrat avec TPSGC : 19040-080201/001/CY - Modification.#002
Date d'attribution du contrat : 15/12/2008
Pour plus de renseignements sur cette étude, prière d'adresser un courriel à por-rop@justice.gc.ca

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

In May 2007 the Government of Canada created a National Seniors Council to give advice to Government on matters of national importance to seniors. One of the first areas identified by this group was combating elder abuse. In the Speech from the Throne delivered that fall, the Government announced its intention to address elder abuse. Budget 2008 committed \$13 million over three years to help seniors and others to recognize the signs and symptoms of elder abuse and to provide information on what support is available. Justice Canada retained EKOS Research Associates to conduct public opinion research (a telephone survey) on the Canadian public's awareness and perceptions of elder abuse with specific attention to financial abuse.

The research was directed toward the general population as opposed to a targeted sub-sample of the population (such as seniors) for several reasons: 1) the focus is on raising awareness of all Canadians; 2) perpetrators of elder abuse are not always seniors themselves, nor are those who can assist seniors at risk; and 3) research seems to suggest that abuse does not always occur when seniors are isolated, and so it is important to pursue a wider awareness of the issue. The study examined the following issues:

- Definition of elder abuse
 - ◇ What people think the term elder abuse means
 - ◇ Perceptions of what types of abuse are encompassed
 - ◇ Perceptions of what financial abuse entails more specifically (descriptions)
- Who experiences elder abuse?
 - ◇ Perceptions and stereotypes of seniors who would be at risk of being victimized
 - ◇ Perceptions of the difference, if any, in age range between the term "elder" and the term "senior" in the context of abuse
 - ◇ Perceptions of risk factors for seniors who experience abuse
- Who engages in elder abuse?
 - ◇ Perceptions of who is the potential perpetrator of elder abuse
 - ◇ Stereotypes around who engages in elder abuse
 - ◇ Perceptions of whether situations affect those who could engage in elder abuse

- Why does elder abuse occur and how often?
 - ◇ Perceptions of root causes of elder abuse
 - ◇ Stereotypes around why elder abuse occurs including ageism
- Information available on financial abuse of seniors
 - ◇ Where would be the best places to put information on financial abuse
- Demographics

1.2 METHODOLOGY

a) Overview

The study involved a 20-minute telephone survey with 3,002 respondents drawn from the general Canadian population. Respondents were 18 years of age and older, and were randomly selected (through random digit dialling). All provinces were sampled, and the survey was administered in both English and French. Surveying on the study was undertaken between January 22 and February 17, 2009.

b) Design and Pretest

Justice Canada undertook the design of the questionnaire for this study. EKOS reviewed the questionnaire and made a few small recommendations regarding overall design and question wording. The final version of this survey is provided in Appendix A.

Once the questionnaire was finalized, it was translated and pre-tested with 49 respondents (28 English and 21 French). Twenty-two (22) of these pre-test respondents (11 English and 11 French) were also the subject of a “cognitive pretest” – i.e., they were asked to describe their thought process as they responded to the questions in order to ensure that questions were clearly understood. The remaining pretest respondents were given a “standard” pretest to test the skip, flow, and understanding of the survey questions.

c) Sampling Strategy

The study involved a stratified random sample of respondents that was designed to provide a national representation of the Canadian general public, 18 years of age and older.

EKOS used Survey Sample software to produce the sample for this project. This software samples by Random Digit Dial (RDD) methodology and checks its samples against published phone lists to divide the RDD into "Directory Listed" (DL) and "Directory Not Listed" (DNL) RDD components.

Once the sample was determined, the telephone numbers were imported into our CATI system. Additional criteria were then added to the introduction of the questionnaire to select the individual respondent in the household. For this survey, the respondent had to be at least 18 years of age.

d) Survey Administration

Fieldwork for this project was conducted by highly trained interviewers at EKOS' call centre in Ottawa. Throughout the data collection, survey supervisors continuously monitored interviewing to ensure consistency of questionnaire administration and interviewing techniques.

As is standard EKOS practice, a minimum of eight call-backs (nine total calls) were made to each selected household in the original sample before retiring a case and substituting another household. Follow-up calls were made on subsequent days, at varying time periods to maximize the potential for reaching a given respondent and appointments are taken at the convenience of the respondent. All individuals were given the choice of conducting the interview in either official language.

At the start of every survey, EKOS informed respondents of their rights under the Privacy and Access to Information Acts. Respondents were also informed of the purpose of the research; the name of the sponsoring department and research supplier; and that their participation in the study is voluntary.

The response rate for this survey was 15 per cent, which is in line with the response rates of other large scale telephone surveys we have conducted.

e) Weighting

Once data collection was complete, the results were statistically weighted by age, sex and region to ensure that the findings were representative of the Canadian population 18 years of age and over.

Weighting was done using the statistical software package, StatXP. This program carries out this task on the basis of the distribution of the population for each variable considered in the weighting scheme (i.e., age, sex, region). Weights were developed so that the differences between the survey sample and the actual population were reduced.

With a sample size of 3,002, the results from this survey may be considered statistically accurate to within +/- 1.8 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The sample sizes broken down by region, gender, and age as well as the associated margins of error are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample Composition & Associated Margins of Error

| | Sample Size | Margin of Error |
|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Region | | |
| British Columbia | 400 | 4.9 |
| Alberta | 284 | 5.8 |
| Saskatchewan/Manitoba | 205 | 6.8 |
| Ontario | 1,150 | 2.9 |
| Quebec | 727 | 3.6 |
| Atlantic Canada | 234 | 6.4 |
| Gender | | |
| Male | 1,465 | 2.6 |
| Female | 1,537 | 2.5 |
| Age | | |
| <25 | 126 | 8.7 |
| 25-44 | 887 | 3.3 |
| 45-64 | 1,358 | 2.7 |
| 65+ | 225 | 6.5 |
| TOTAL | 3,002 | 1.8 |

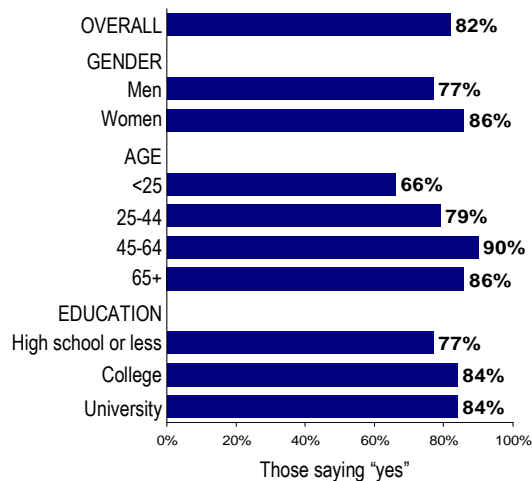
2. AWARENESS OF ELDER ABUSE

Canada's population is aging rapidly and according to the most recent projections, seniors (defined as individuals 65 years of age and older) will outnumber children 15 years of age and younger in the coming decade.¹¹ These projections – along with the already unprecedented increase in the number of seniors in Canada – has led to growing concerns about the physical, social, and economic well-being of this segment of the population. By corollary, concern over the victimization of older Canadians has also heightened in recent years. The aim of the current study is to explore some of these issues by helping to establish what the Canadian public knows and thinks about elder abuse in Canada.


As a way of establishing the context for the remainder of the survey, respondents were first asked whether or not they had heard the term “elder abuse”. Overall, more than eight in ten Canadians (82 per cent) say they are aware of the term, while fewer than one in five (18 per cent) said they had not heard of the term prior to the survey. Survey results also reveal that while awareness of the term “elder abuse” is consistently high across Canada, it does vary somewhat across regional and socio-demographic characteristics.

Awareness of Term “Elder Abuse”

“Have you ever heard the term “elder abuse” before today?”



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¹¹ Source: [2006 Census: Portrait of the Canadian Population in 2006, by Age and Sex: National Portrait](#), (Statistics Canada).

- Regionally, residents of Alberta (87 per cent) are most likely to be aware of the term “elder abuse”, whereas those living in Quebec (78 per cent) are least familiar with the term.
- Women (86 per cent) are more familiar with the term than men (77 per cent).
- Older segments of the population are also more aware (e.g., 90 per cent of the 45-64 cohort and 86 per cent of the over 65 cohort have heard the term, compared to 66 per cent of the under 25 cohort and 79 per cent of the 25-44 cohort).
- Awareness of the term is greater among Canadians of higher socioeconomic standing (85 per cent with annual household incomes of more the \$100,000 and 84 per cent of the university-educated vs. 72 per cent with annual household incomes of less than \$20,000 and 77 per cent of those with a high school education or less).
- There is less awareness of the term among those who identified themselves as members of visible minority groups (78 per cent vs. 83 per cent of non-visible minorities) and those who were born outside of Canada (71 per cent vs. 84 per cent of those who list Canada as their country of origin).
- Interestingly, whether or not there is a “senior” (i.e., an individual 65 years of age or older) living in the home makes no difference in terms of awareness of the term “elder abuse”.

3. PERCEPTIONS REGARDING ABUSE OF SENIORS

The incidence of elder abuse in Canada is not well established due to several factors. For one, elder abuse is not always reported to the police, and therefore, the incidence of abuse is not accurately reflected in crime data.¹² Moreover, although general household surveys (such as the General Social Survey) attempt to address the underreporting in crime data by asking Canadians about their personal experiences with victimization, these surveys are often unable to reach the more vulnerable members of the population – including many seniors.¹³ Complicating matters further is the fact that, according to the Canadian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, there are also conflicting views of what constitutes “elder abuse” (e.g., are frauds or scams targeting seniors a form of abuse?).¹⁴

In this section of the survey, we examine the public’s perceptions of the abuse of seniors, including the different types of abuse seniors may experience, the perceived prevalence of elder abuse, and perceptions of the perpetrators of said abuse, and the potential reasons for elder abuse.

3.1 PERCEIVED ABUSE EXPERIENCED BY SENIORS

Canadians were asked to name, without prompting, the kinds of abuse they believe seniors might experience.¹⁵ Physical abuse (e.g., hitting, spitting on) tops the list (mentioned by 49 per cent of respondents), followed by neglect (44 per cent), and emotional/psychological/verbal abuse (38 per cent). Financial abuse (e.g., forging a senior’s signature) is also mentioned by a sizable proportion of the Canadian public (21 per cent). Other types of abuse are mentioned by fewer than one in ten respondents and include: sexual abuse (three per cent), abuse/mistreatment perpetrated by family/caregivers (two per cent), and theft/robbery (one per cent). There is also a very small minority of the Canadian public (two per cent) that does not think that elderly persons experience any form of abuse.

¹² See the Statistics Canada publication, Seniors as Victims of Crime 2004 and 2005, for more information.

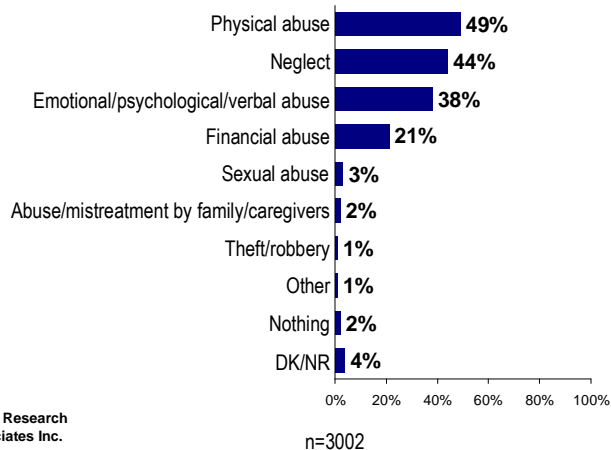
¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Canadian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, “*What is Senior Abuse?*” (www.cnpea.ca)

¹⁵ Before answering this question, respondents were first reminded that some elderly people live in institutions (e.g., nursing homes, senior’s residences), while others live in the community either on their own or with family or friends.

Perceived Abuse Experienced by Seniors

“Some seniors live in institutions such as nursing homes or senior residences, however, others live in the community, by themselves, or with family or friends. If I asked you about what kinds of abuse seniors might experience, what comes to mind?”
[Open – Multiple responses accepted]



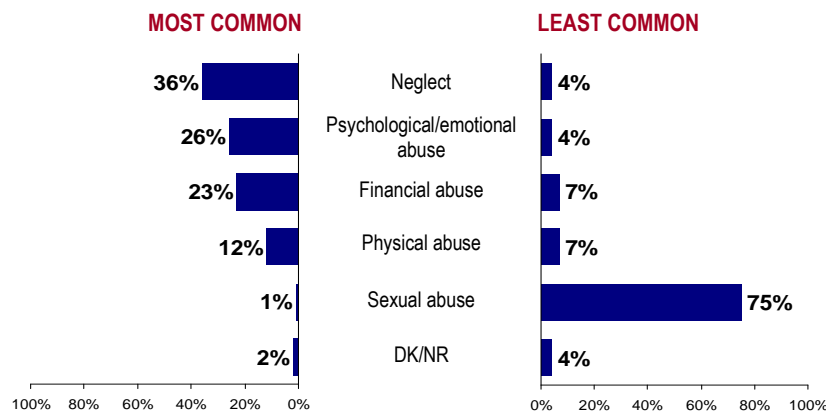
- Regionally, residents of Ontario are more likely to mention both physical abuse (55 per cent) and emotional/psychological/verbal abuse (42 per cent) than those living elsewhere in Canada. Financial abuse, on the other hand, is mentioned more frequently in Alberta and the Prairies (28 per cent, respectively).
- Not only are women more likely to be aware of the term “elder abuse” than men, they are also significantly more likely to perceive seniors as experiencing the following types of abuse: physical (53 per cent vs. 45 per cent of men), emotional (41 per cent vs. 35 per cent of men), and financial (24 per cent vs. 19 per cent of men).
- The perception that seniors experience physical, emotional, and financial abuse is more common among Canadians with higher levels of educational attainment (55 per cent of university-educated respondents think that seniors experience physical abuse compared to 42 per cent of respondents with high school education or less).
- Interestingly, Canadians living with a senior are less likely to think of physical abuse (42 per cent) than those who do not (50 per cent).

3.2 MOST/LEAST COMMON TYPES OF ABUSE

In addition to naming the various kinds of abuse seniors may experience, respondents were asked to select from a list the type of abuse that they think is most commonly and least commonly experienced by seniors. The list included the following types of abuse: physical abuse, financial abuse, psychological/emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. When presented with these options, neglect is chosen as the most common type of abuse (36 per cent), followed by psychological/emotional abuse (26 per cent), and financial abuse (23 per cent). About one in ten (12 per cent) thinks physical abuse is the most common type of abuse perpetrated against seniors, and only one per cent picks sexual abuse as the most common form of elder abuse.

Most/Least Common Types of Abuse

“I am going to read you a list of types of abuse that could be experienced by seniors. Please tell me which one you think is MOST/LEAST COMMON”



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- Compared to those living elsewhere in Canada, residents of Quebec are much less likely to consider neglect the most common form of elder abuse (28 per cent vs. 36 per cent at that national level). Quebecers are instead more likely to consider psychological/emotional abuse the most prevalent form of abuse (30 per cent vs. 26 per cent at the national level).
- The belief that neglect is the most common form of abuse is more prevalent among younger Canadians (43 per cent between the ages of 25-44 believe it is the most prevalent vs. 26 per cent of seniors). Older Canadians, on the other hand, are more likely to name psychological/emotional abuse as the most prevalent form of elder abuse (36 per cent of respondents over the age of 65 vs. 21 per cent of the 25-44 age cohort).

- Respondents with seniors in the home are less inclined to believe that neglect is the most frequent form of abuse (30 per cent vs. 37 per cent of respondents who do not live with someone over the age of 65).

Using the same list, Canadians were also asked to name the type of elder abuse that they believe is *least* likely to occur. Given that it is ranked last in the hierarchy of *most* common forms of abuse, it is not unexpected to find sexual abuse at the top of the list of the *least* common types of abuse. In fact, Canadians overwhelmingly select sexual abuse as the least common form of abuse experienced by seniors (chosen by 75 per cent of respondents). All other forms of abuse are chosen as the least common by fewer than one in ten respondents.

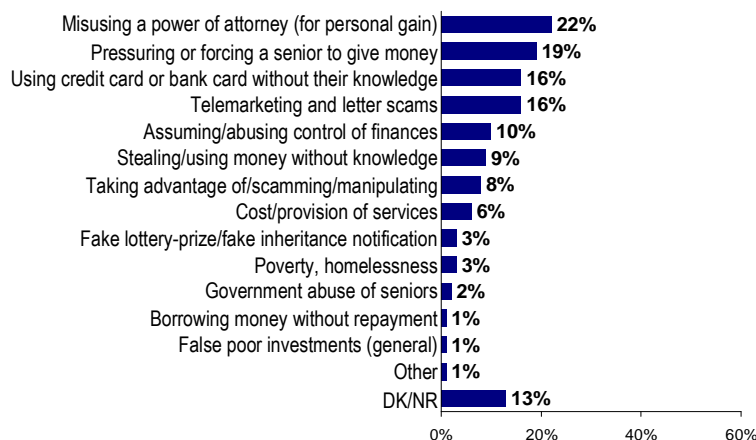
- The belief that sexual abuse is the least likely form of abuse varies considerably by age (e.g., 80 per cent of the 25-44 age cohort thinks it's the least likely form of abuse vs. 66 per cent of those over the age of 65) and level of educational attainment (e.g., 79 per cent of university-educated Canadians vs. 65 per cent of those with a high school education or less).
- Visible minority Canadians are somewhat less likely to perceive sexual abuse as the least common type of abuse (69 per cent vs. 76 per cent of non-visible minority Canadians).

3.3 PERCEIVED EXAMPLES OF FINANCIAL ABUSE

When asked, unprompted, to consider the types of financial abuse that could be experienced by seniors, Canadians are able to generate a sizable list of potential abuses. At the top of the list were misusing a power of attorney for personal gain (mentioned by 22 per cent of respondents), and pressuring a senior to give money (19 per cent). Using a credit card or bank card without their knowledge, and telemarketing and letter scams were also seen as fairly common forms of financial abuse (16 per cent each). About one in ten mentioned assuming/abusing control of finances (ten per cent), and stealing/using seniors' money (nine per cent). All other responses were mentioned by eight per cent or fewer Canadians. About one in ten Canadians (13 per cent) were unable to provide any examples of financial abuse that could be perpetrated against seniors.

Perceived Examples of Financial Abuse

“One kind of abuse that seniors could face is financial abuse. Can you think of any examples?” [Open – Multiple responses accepted]



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- Misusing a power of attorney is mentioned more often by residents of Ontario (24 per cent vs. 22 per cent nationally), university-educated respondents (26 per cent vs. 16 per cent with a high school education or less), and non-visible minorities (23 per cent vs. 17 per cent of visible minority Canadians).
- Regionally, residents of Quebec are the most likely to identify pressuring/forcing a senior to give money when asked to think about the types of financial abuse that could be experienced by seniors (28 per cent vs. 19 per cent at the national level). Women (22 per cent vs. 16 per

cent of men) and the university-educated (21 per cent vs. 16 per cent with a high school education or less) are also more inclined to mention this type of financial abuse.

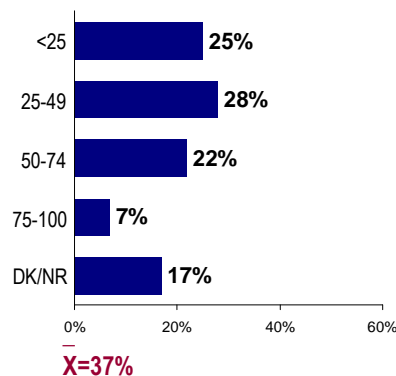
- Telemarketing/letter scams are most often mentioned by residents of the Prairies (27 per cent vs. 16 per cent at the national level), men (19 per cent vs. 14 per cent of women), the university-educated (19 per cent vs. 14 per cent with a high school education or less), and the most affluent Canadians (20 per cent of those with annual household incomes of more than \$100,000 vs. 12 per cent with annual incomes of less than \$20,000).
- The incidence of those unable to name any examples of financial abuse that could be perpetrated against seniors is higher among youth (17 per cent of those under 25 years of age vs. 13 per cent overall), those with high school education or less (20 per cent), those living with seniors (17 per cent), those born outside of Canada (17 per cent), and visible minorities (16 per cent).

3.4 PERCEIVED PERCENTAGE OF SENIORS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED FINANCIAL ABUSE

Canadians were also asked to provide an estimate of the extent of financial abuse of seniors. Respondents were provided with the following definition of financial abuse: “using a senior’s money or property for your own gain, not theirs.” They were then asked to estimate the percentage of seniors they think have experienced financial abuse. On average, Canadians believe that 37 per cent of seniors have experienced financial abuse.

Perceived Percentage of Seniors Who Have Experienced Financial Abuse

“Financial abuse can be defined as using a senior’s money or property for your own gain, not theirs. What percentage of seniors do you think have experienced financial abuse?”



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The groups that estimate the rate of financial abuse among seniors as significantly higher or lower than the average are outlined below.

- The prevalence of financial abuse of seniors is rated **lower** on average by:
 - ◇ men (35 per cent);
 - ◇ seniors (33 per cent);
 - ◇ university-educated (35 per cent);
 - ◇ those earning \$100,000 or more in annual household income (32 per cent); and
 - ◇ those living with someone over the age of 65 (34 per cent).

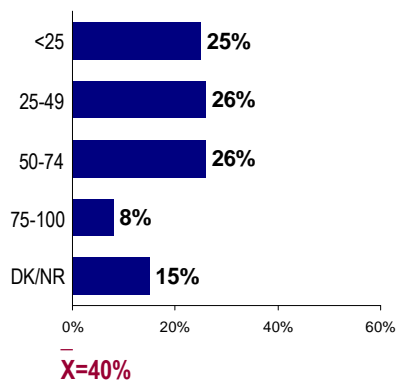
- By comparison, the prevalence of financial abuse of seniors is rated **higher** on average by:
 - ◇ women (40 per cent);
 - ◇ those younger than 25 years of age (42 per cent);
 - ◇ respondents with a high school education or less (39 per cent);
 - ◇ families with children in the home (39 per cent); and
 - ◇ visible minorities (44 per cent).

3.5 PERCEIVED PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS OVER 65 WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED ELDER ABUSE

Respondents were informed at this point that all remaining questions concerning elder abuse referred to those over the age of 65. Respondents were also asked to estimate the percentage of seniors who have experienced any form of elder abuse. Results reveal that the perceived rate of elder abuse in general does not differ significantly from the perceived rate of financial abuse experienced by seniors. Overall, Canadians estimate the rate of elder abuse (in general) to be 40 per cent on average (roughly the same as the 37 per cent that are assumed to have experienced financial abuse). Interestingly, both these estimates are considerably higher than the ten per cent rate of victimization captured in the most recent General Social Survey (GSS).¹⁶ Although this survey's conceptualization of elder abuse is broader than what is reflected in the GSS¹⁷, it is nonetheless useful to compare the perceived versus the reported levels of victimization.

Perceived Percentage of Persons Over 65 Who Have Experienced Elder Abuse

“What percentage of persons over 65 years of age do you think would have experienced any form of elder abuse?”



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¹⁶ This figure is based on information provided by respondents to the 2004 General Social Survey. See the Statistics Canada publication, *Seniors as Victims of Crime 2004 and 2005*, for more information.

¹⁷ The GSS asks respondents about their personal victimization experiences.

The groups that estimate the rate of elder abuse as significantly higher or lower than the average are outlined below.

- The prevalence of elder abuse is rated **lower** on average by:
 - ◇ residents of Quebec (36 per cent);
 - ◇ men (37 per cent);
 - ◇ older Canadians (38 per cent of the 45-64 age cohort and 32 per cent of seniors); and
 - ◇ those living with individuals over the age of 65 (35 per cent).

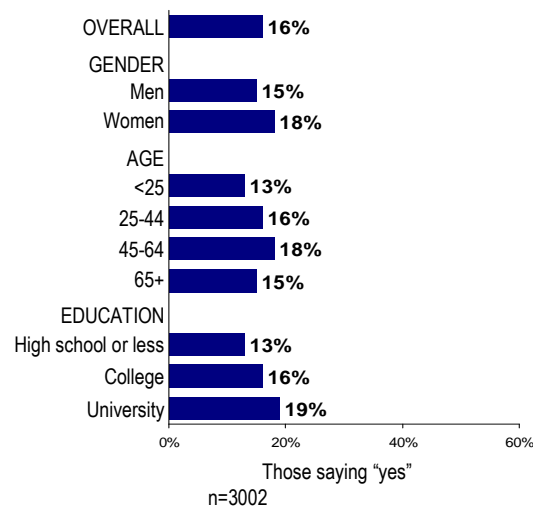
- By comparison, the prevalence of elder abuse is rated **higher** on average by:
 - ◇ residents of Ontario (41 per cent);
 - ◇ women (42 per cent);
 - ◇ younger Canadians (45 per cent of those under 25 years of age and 43 per cent of the 25-44 age cohort);
 - ◇ college-educated Canadians (43 per cent); and
 - ◇ visible minorities (46 per cent).

3.6 KNOWLEDGE OF SENIORS EXPERIENCING ELDER ABUSE

Despite perceiving elder abuse to be in the range of 40 per cent on average, Canadians first-hand knowledge of elder abuse appears to be much closer to the reported incidence in the population (i.e., the ten per cent captured in the 2004 GSS). When asked whether or not they suspect that someone they know may be experiencing some form of elder abuse, it is a clear minority (16 per cent) that says they do, whereas most (83 per cent) say they do not.

Knowledge of Seniors Experiencing Elder Abuse

“Do you know any seniors who you suspect might be experiencing any form of elder abuse?”



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- Regionally, residents of British Columbia (20 per cent) and Quebec (19 per cent) are slightly more likely to say they have direct knowledge of elder abuse.
- Women are more likely to indicate they know seniors experiencing elder abuse (18 per cent vs. 15 per cent of men), as are those with higher levels of educational attainment (19 per cent of the university-educated vs. 13 per cent of those with a high school education or less).
- Not surprisingly, those involved in caring for the elderly either at home or elsewhere are also more likely to have firsthand knowledge of elder abuse (21 per cent vs. 15 per cent who do not care for an elder).

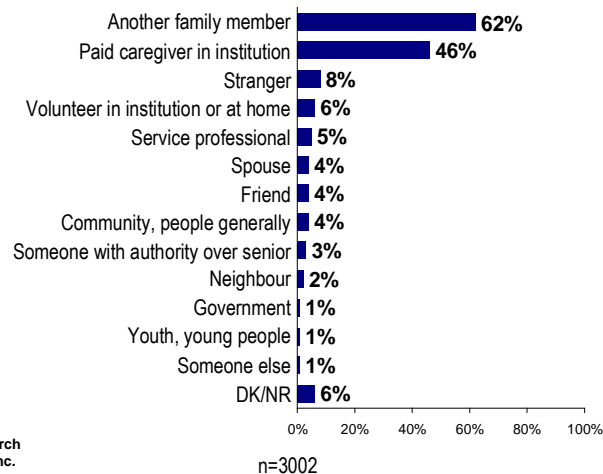
3.7 POSSIBLE PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE FOR ABUSE

According to the latest police-reported data, seniors are most likely to be victimized by someone they know.¹⁸ Results from this survey seem to reflect this finding. Indeed, when asked, without prompting, who they pictured as being responsible for elder abuse, very few think of someone who is not at least acquainted with the senior (only eight per cent say “stranger”). Overall, two main categories of perpetrators come to mind: a family member other than a spouse (62 per cent) and paid caregivers in institutions (46 per cent).

Possible Person(s) Responsible for Abuse

“When you think about elder abuse in general, who do you picture as the person or persons who are responsible for the abuse?”

[Open – Multiple responses accepted]



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- While they still see family members (54 per cent) and paid caregivers (36 per cent) as the primary perpetrators of elder abuse, Quebeckers are less likely than those living elsewhere in Canada to hold these groups responsible. Instead, they are somewhat more likely to picture volunteer caregivers (ten per cent vs. six per cent nationally) or service professionals (seven per cent vs. five per cent nationally) as responsible for elder abuse.
- Residents of Alberta are particularly likely to consider another family member as responsible for elder abuse (72 per cent), as do women (65 per cent vs. 59 per cent of men), the university-educated (69 per cent vs. 54 per cent with a high school education or less), and

¹⁸ This information is drawn from the 2004 Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey. See the Statistics Canada publication, Seniors as Victims of Crime 2004 and 2005, for more information.

more affluent Canadians (e.g., 75 per cent with annual household incomes of \$100,000 or more vs. 54 per cent with annual household incomes of less than \$20,000).

3.8 PEOPLE MOST/LEAST LIKELY TO ABUSE A SENIOR

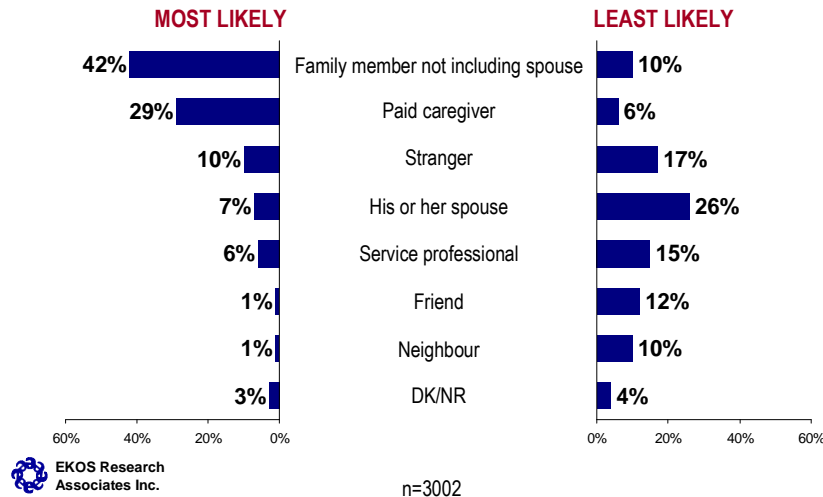
In addition to naming, unprompted, the various types of individuals they picture as being responsible for abusing seniors, respondents were asked to select from a list the category of people they think are most and least likely to abuse a senior. The list included the following categories of individuals: spouse, family member (not including a spouse), friend, neighbour, paid caregiver, service professional¹⁹ and stranger. Similar to the results of the open-ended exercise, family members other than spouses are selected most frequently (42 per cent), followed by paid caregivers (29 per cent). A few others selected stranger (ten per cent), spouse (seven per cent), or service professional (six per cent) as the most likely culprits. Almost no one names a friend or neighbour (one per cent each) as being the most likely to abuse a senior.

- A family member (not including a spouse) is more likely to be seen as responsible for the abuse of seniors by women (45 per cent vs. 39 per cent of men), the university-educated (47 per cent vs. 35 per cent with a high school education or less), and the most affluent Canadians (50 per cent vs. 36 per cent of the least affluent).
- Visible minority Canadians are more inclined to think that a paid caregiver is most likely to be involved in this type of abuse (35 per cent vs. 29 per cent of non-visible minorities).
- The idea that a stranger is the most likely to abuse a senior is more common among men (12 per cent vs. eight per cent of women), youth (17 per cent vs. nine per cent of seniors), and less educated or affluent respondents (13 and 15 per cent, respectively).

¹⁹ For example, lawyer, banker, insurance representative, doctor etc.

People Most/Least Likely to Abuse A Senior

“I am going to read a list of categories of people who might abuse seniors. Please tell me which of these people, in your view, is the MOST/LEAST LIKELY to abuse a senior?”



Using the same list, Canadians were also asked to name the category of individual that they believe is *least* likely to abuse a senior. Given that they are rated as the groups *most* likely to engage in elder abuse, it is not unexpected to find that very few name another family member (ten per cent) or a paid caregiver (six per cent) as the individuals *least* likely to abuse a senior. Instead, Canadians are most likely to consider a spouse (26 per cent) to be the *least* likely to engage in this activity – even though recent police data suggests that spouses are among the groups more likely to be involved in the victimization of seniors.²⁰ Another one in six (17 per cent) felt that a stranger is the least likely culprit. All other categories of individuals are considered the least likely to abuse a senior by about one in ten respondents (15 per cent service professionals, 12 per cent friends, and ten per cent neighbours).

- The belief that seniors are least likely to be abused by their spouse is more common in Quebec (29 per cent vs. 26 per cent nationally). This perception also declines with age (35 per cent of youth think that spouses are the least likely to engage in this behaviour vs. 19 per cent of seniors themselves).

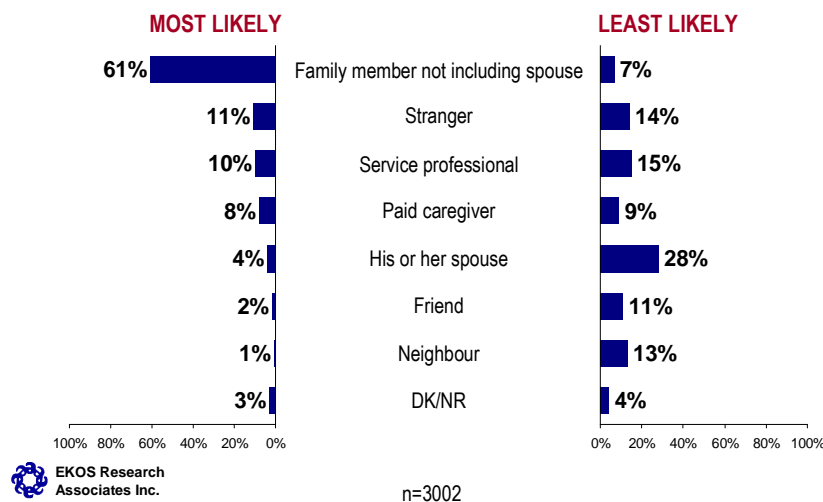
²⁰ See the Statistics Canada publication, Seniors as Victims of Crime 2004 and 2005, for more information.

3.9 PEOPLE MOST/LEAST LIKELY TO FINANCIALLY ABUSE A SENIOR

Referring to the same list of individuals, Canadians were asked to name who they thought would be the most and least likely to *financially* abuse a senior. In this context, a family member (not including a spouse) is once again named as the most probable perpetrator (61 per cent). Unlike elder abuse in general, however, no other category of individual is considered a likely threat by a significant proportion of the population (i.e., the category of family members is selected over even its closest rival, strangers, by a margin of more than five to one). Indeed, no other category is named by more than about one in ten Canadians.

People Most/Least Likely to Financially Abuse A Senior

“Please tell me which of these people, in your view, is the MOST/LEAST LIKELY to FINANCIALLY abuse a senior?”



- Once again, women are more likely to believe that a family member is the most probable perpetrator (65 per cent vs. 57 per cent of men).
- More educated (66 per cent with a university education vs. 53 per cent with a high school education or less) and more affluent Canadians (72 per cent of those with the highest annual household incomes vs. 54 per cent with the lowest annual incomes) are also more likely to see a family member as most likely to engage in this behaviour.

As in the case with elder abuse in general, a spouse is considered the most benign threat, seen as *least* likely to financially abuse a senior by about three in ten Canadians (28 per cent). At the other end of the scale, very few consider other family members to be the least likely to engage in this behaviour (seven per cent). There is no clear hierarchy for the remaining categories of individuals (i.e., about one in ten Canadians rate each of these groups as least likely to financially abuse a senior).

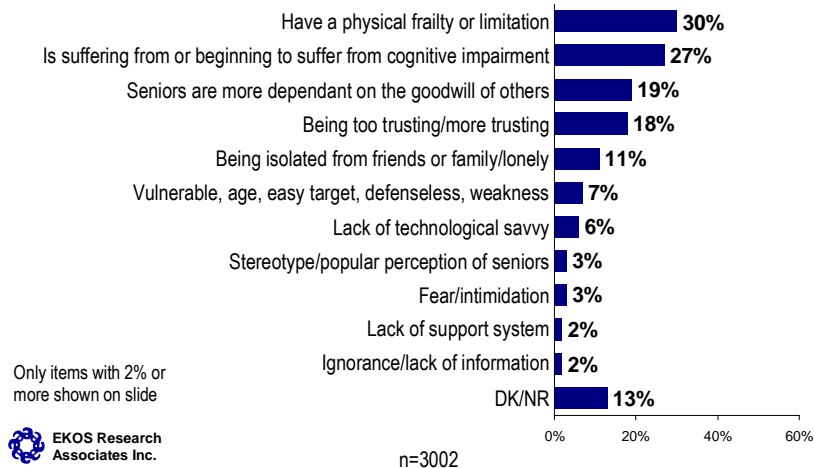
- The belief that seniors are least likely to be financially abused by their spouse is more common in the Prairies and Atlantic Canada (36 per cent and 34 per cent, respectively, vs. 28 per cent nationally).

3.10 PERCEIVED REASONS FOR SENIOR ABUSE

Canadians were asked, unprompted, to provide reasons as to why some seniors might be more likely to experience abuse than adults under the age of 65. By grouping responses together, several broad themes are evident. The most common – mentioned by about two in three respondents – is a perception that seniors are more vulnerable due to physical or mental limitations (e.g., physically frail (30 per cent), cognitive impairment (27 per cent), and weak/defenseless (seven per cent)). Quite a few others (26 per cent) felt seniors might be more prone to abuse because they are seen as “naïve” (e.g., too trusting (18 per cent), not technologically savvy (six per cent), or lacking information (two per cent)). A further 19 per cent felt seniors might be more likely to experience abuse because they are more dependent on the goodwill of others. There is also a sense among some Canadians that the isolation of seniors might lead to abuse (11 per cent). All other reasons are mentioned by fewer than five per cent of respondents. About one in ten Canadians (13 per cent) were unable to provide a response to this question.

Perceived Reasons for Senior Abuse

“Some people think that seniors are more likely to experience any form of abuse than other adults under 65 years of age. Can you give me some reasons why this might be so?” [Open – Multiple responses accepted]



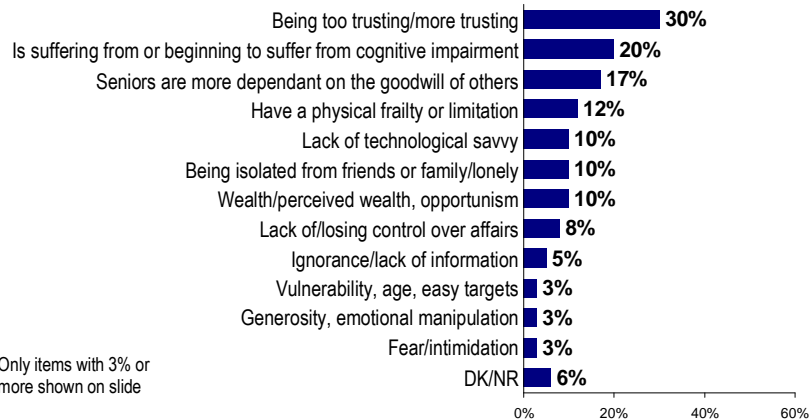
- As we have seen in other parts of this survey, Quebecers tend to have slightly different views than those living elsewhere in Canada. For instance, residents of Quebec are more likely than other Canadians to consider the following as factors in elder abuse: physical frailty (36 per cent vs. 30 per cent nationally), isolation from family and friends (15 per cent vs. 11 per cent nationally), and a lack of technological savvy (nine per cent vs. six per cent overall).
- Women, who have consistently been more tuned into these issues throughout the survey, are more likely to think that elder abuse is a result of seniors being physically frail (32 per cent vs. 28 per cent of men), dependent on others (22 per cent vs. 16 per cent of men), and isolated from family and friends (12 per cent vs. ten per cent of men).
- Those with higher levels of educational attainment are also more likely than their counterparts to identify physical frailty as the main reason for abuse of seniors (33 per cent of the university-educated vs. 25 per cent of those with a high school education or less).

3.11 PERCEIVED REASONS FOR FINANCIAL ABUSE OF SENIORS

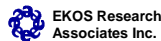
Respondents were also asked, unprompted, why seniors might be more susceptible to financial abuse. Interestingly, many of the same themes emerge from this question. In this case, however, responses revolving around naïveté (e.g., too trusting (30 per cent), not technologically savvy (ten per cent), and lack of information (five per cent)) are mentioned most often (combined 45 per cent of mentions), followed by vulnerability due to cognitive (20 per cent) or physical (12 per cent) impairments (combined 32 per cent of responses). Once again, many respondents think seniors are more susceptible to abuse due to their dependence on others (17 per cent) or because they are isolated from friends and family (ten per cent). New to this list is a perception that seniors may be abused financially because of their wealth/perceived wealth (ten per cent) or because they have relinquished control over their financial affairs (eight per cent). All other reasons are mentioned by fewer than five per cent of respondents.

Perceived Reasons for Financial Abuse of Seniors

“Now thinking about financial abuse, can you give me some reasons why some seniors might be more susceptible to financial abuse?”
 [Open – Multiple responses accepted]



Only items with 3% or more shown on slide



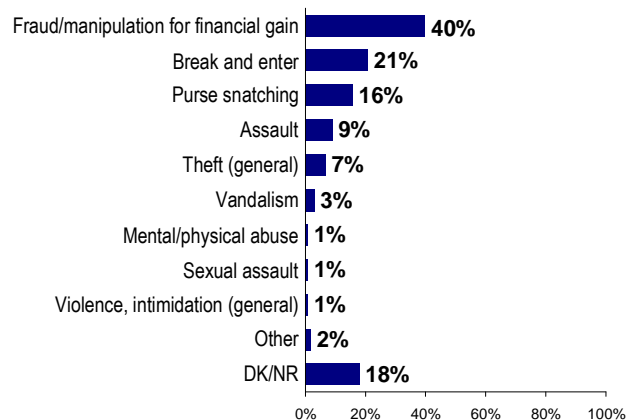
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3.12 SENIORS VULNERABILITY TO CRIMES COMMITTED BY STRANGERS

As mentioned earlier, research suggests that seniors are most likely to be victimized by someone they know.²¹ That said, every year many seniors still fall victim to crimes perpetrated by strangers. In light of this, Canadians were asked, unprompted, whether there are crimes committed by strangers that seniors are particularly vulnerable to. Survey results reveal that while quite a few of the responses offered focused on property offences (e.g., break and enter (21 per cent), purse snatching (16 per cent), and vandalism (three per cent)), the single most common response is fraud/manipulation for financial gain (mentioned by 40 per cent of respondents). Very few consider seniors to be particularly vulnerable to violent offences (e.g., sexual assault, mental/physical abuse, violence/intimidation in general). Interestingly, about one in five respondents (18 per cent) were unable to think of any stranger-initiated crimes that seniors may be particularly vulnerable to.

Seniors Vulnerability to Crimes Committed by Strangers

“Are there any crimes committed by strangers that you think seniors are particularly vulnerable to?” [Open – Multiple responses accepted]



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n=3002

- Once again, residents of Quebec hold somewhat different views on this issue. With respect to seniors' vulnerability to crimes committed by strangers, Quebecers are half as likely as those living elsewhere in Canada to think that fraud is a serious threat for seniors (19 per cent vs. 40 per cent nationally). They are, on the other hand, more likely than other Canadians to think seniors are vulnerable to purse snatching (22 per cent vs. 16 per cent nationally) or assault (13 per cent vs. nine per cent overall).

²¹ See the Statistics Canada publication, Seniors as Victims of Crime 2004 and 2005, for more information.

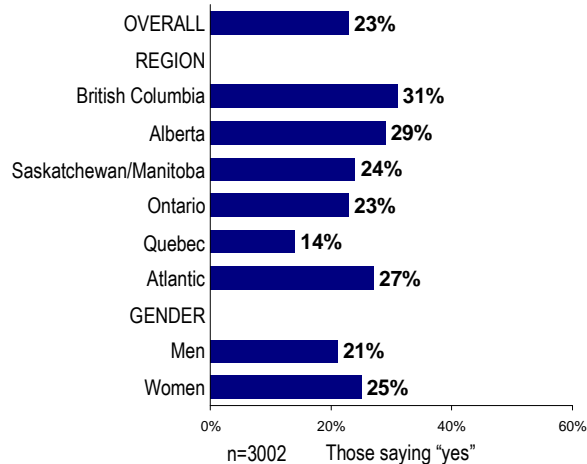
- The belief that seniors are particularly vulnerable to fraud increases with level of educational attainment (29 per cent among those with a high school education or less compared to 46 per cent of the university-educated) and annual household income (26 per cent of those earning less than \$20,000 in annual household income compared to 53 per cent of those earning \$100,000 or more in household income).

3.13 PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH FAMILY VIOLENCE

Canadians were also asked a question about their experience with family violence. They were read the following definition of family violence: “Family violence can be defined as a range of abusive behaviours by one family member against another, or by one spouse or intimate partner against another, that cause harm to that other person, whether it is physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, or financial”, and then asked whether this had affected their family at some point in their life. The majority of Canadians (76 per cent) say their family has not been directly affected by family violence, however, a significant minority (23 per cent) say their family has been affected by family violence at some point in their life.

Personal Experience With Family Violence

“Family violence can be defined as a wide range of abusive behaviours by one family member against another, or by one spouse or other intimate partner against another, that cause harm to that other person, whether it is physical, emotional, psychological, sexual or financial harm. Has family violence affected your family at some point in your life?”



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- The reported exposure to family violence is highest in British Columbia (31 per cent) and Alberta (29 per cent), and lowest in Quebec (14 per cent).
- Women (25 per cent) are more likely than men (21 per cent) to say their family has been affected by family violence at some point in their life.
- The reported exposure to family violence is also higher among Canadians between the ages of 45 and 64 (25 per cent), those with no seniors in the home (24 per cent vs. 17 per cent living with someone over the age of 65), and visible minorities (31 per cent vs. 21 per cent of non-visible minorities).

4. PERCEPTIONS OF SENIORS VERSUS ELDERS

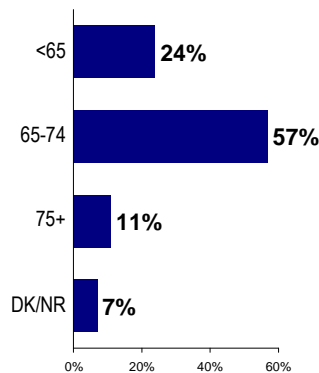
In this chapter we move away from the issue of abuse, to a broader exploration of the definition of what it means to be a “senior” or an “elder” in Canadian society, and whether these definitions influence perceptions of this increasingly important age demographic.

4.1 AGE THAT SOMEONE BECOMES A SENIOR

Respondents were asked at what age they consider a person becomes a senior. A majority of respondents (57 per cent) feel that one becomes a senior at age 65, in alignment with the Statistics Canada definition,²² as well as the generally accepted age of retirement. However, one in four (24 per cent) believe that a person is a senior before the age of 65, while roughly one in ten (11 per cent) put the age at 75 or older. Seven per cent do not have an opinion or did not respond.

Age That Someone Becomes A Senior

“People could experience abuse at any age. In your view, at what age does someone become a senior?”



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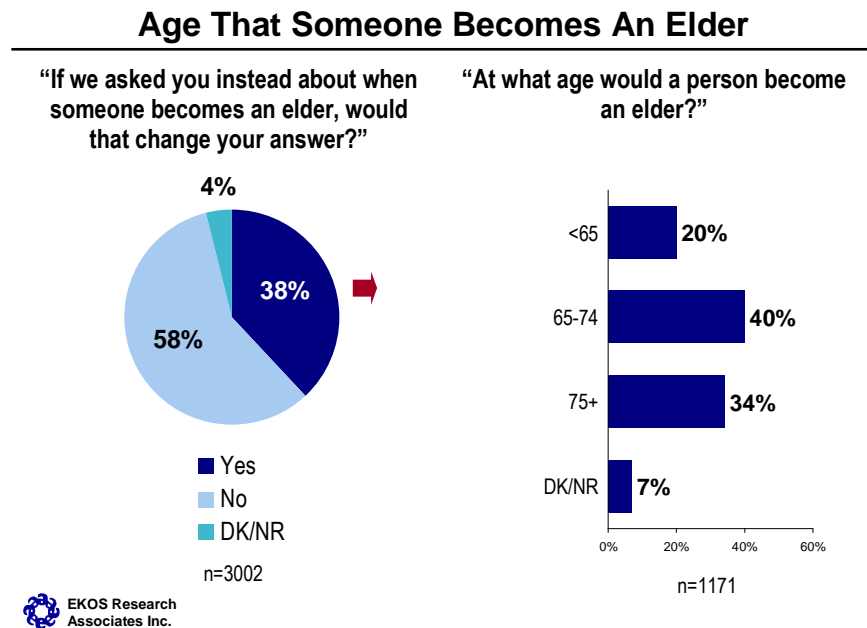
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²² Statistics Canada, *Overview 2007*. http://www41.statcan.gc.ca/2007/70000/ceb70000_000-eng.htm

- Results suggest a correlation between the age of respondents and the threshold at which they believe a person becomes a senior. Four in ten (39 per cent) of those under 25 years of age place the age of a senior below the age of 65 (i.e., 64 years of age or younger), while those aged 45-64 are somewhat more likely to put the age of a senior at over 75 years (15 per cent). Interestingly, respondents over the age of 65 are much more reluctant than the general population to draw a definitive line at which a person becomes a senior (13 per cent did not provide a response to this question).
- Respondents from visible minority groups (37 per cent), those earning less than \$20,000 in annual household income (34 per cent), and those with high school education or less (31 per cent) are more likely than others to place the age of a senior under 65.
- Regionally, residents of Quebec are more likely than other Canadians to view seniors as 75 years of age and older (14 per cent vs. 11 per cent nationally). In addition, respondents in Quebec are more likely to indicate they are unsure about when a person becomes a senior (11 per cent).

4.2 AGE THAT SOMEONE BECOMES AN ELDER

Respondents were then asked if using the term “elder” instead of “senior” would change their response about age threshold. The majority of respondents (58 per cent) say there would be no change, however, almost four in ten (38 per cent) say it would affect their answer.



- Respondents in Quebec were particularly likely to feel that the term elder has no bearing on their view of age threshold (65 per cent).
- Women (42 per cent) are more likely than men (33 per cent) to make a distinction between seniors and elders.

Respondents who said the term “elder” would change their answer to the previous question were then asked to specify the age at which they think a person becomes an elder. Interestingly, results for this question skewed slightly older than the results for the previous question about seniors: more than one-third of these respondents (34 per cent) put the age at 75 and above (compared to 11 per cent when asked about seniors).

- Younger respondents (aged 25 and under) are almost five times as likely as older Canadians (aged 65 and up) to view an elder as someone 64 or younger (49 per cent vs. 11 per cent respectively). Those with lower incomes also tend to put elders in the younger age range of 64 or under (30 per cent).
- Women (40 per cent) are more inclined than men (26 per cent) to consider an elder as someone over the age of 75.

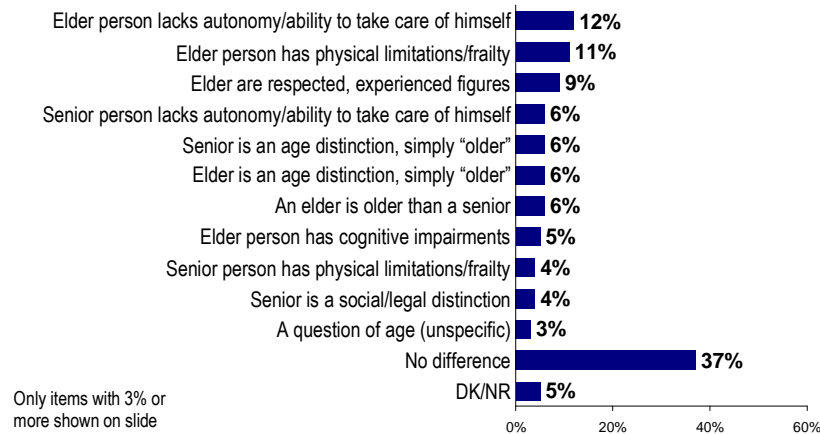
4.3 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN ELDER AND A SENIOR

Respondents were then asked, unprompted, to describe the differences between a senior and an elder. In keeping with the results of the earlier questions, a plurality of respondents (37 per cent) sees no difference between the two.

Among those who do see a difference, results reveal mixed/negative views of elders relative to seniors. About one in ten associate a lack of autonomy (12 per cent) and physical limitations (11 per cent) with being an elder. Other respondents were more neutral in their assessments: 21 percent characterize the difference as one of age only (i.e., senior is an age distinction (six per cent), elder is an age distinction (six per cent), elder is older than a senior (six per cent), or a question of age (three per cent)). However, some respondents offered a more positive view of elders: nine per cent see elders as being respected and experienced individuals.

Difference Between An Elder and A Senior

“In your mind, what is the difference between an elder and a senior?”
[Open – Multiple responses accepted]



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- Regionally, three in ten respondents in British Columbia (30 per cent) and Ontario (30 per cent) feel there is no difference between seniors and elders, whereas in Quebec, over half of respondents (55 per cent) make no distinction between these terms.

5. SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT FINANCIAL ABUSE OF SENIORS

In this chapter, we explore the potential and preferred sources of information on the financial abuse of seniors.

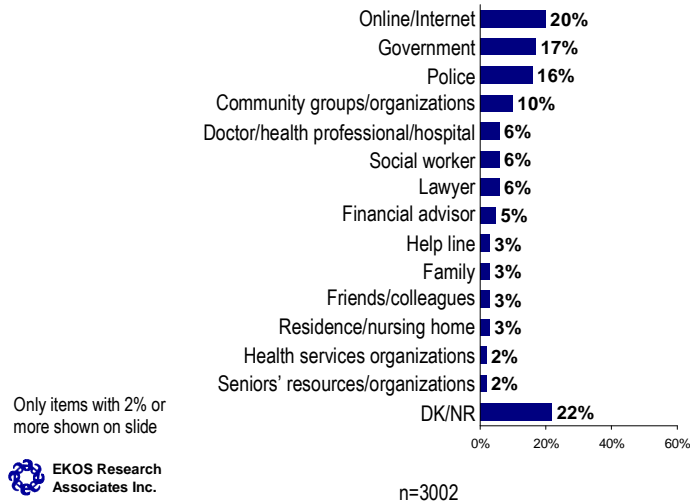
5.1 SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT FINANCIAL ABUSE OF SENIORS

Respondents were asked to name – without prompting – the sources they would turn to get information about financial abuse of seniors (e.g., how to identify and deal with it). The answers provided covered a broad range of resources.

One in five (20 per cent) say they would go to the Internet for information about financial abuse of seniors, one in six (17 per cent) cite the government as their primary information source, and 16 per cent mentioned the police. One in four respondents (23 per cent) would seek advice from some kind of professional (e.g., doctor (six per cent), lawyer (six per cent), financial advisor (five per cent), or social worker (six per cent)), while ten per cent indicated they would turn to community-based organizations for help. A small minority (six per cent) name family or friends as a source of information about the financial abuse of seniors, and only two per cent would contact an organization targeted specifically to seniors' needs. A number of respondents (22 per cent) either did not know or did not respond to this question.

Source of Information About Financial Abuse of Seniors

“If you wanted to, where would you go for information about the financial abuse of seniors such as how to identify and how to deal with it?” [Open – Multiple responses accepted]



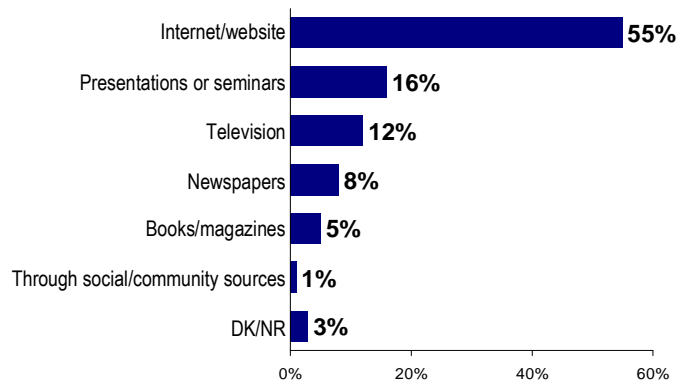
- Quebecers are more likely to turn to family (seven per cent) or health services organizations (seven per cent) for information about the financial abuse of seniors. However, at six per cent, they are well below the national average in terms of seeking this information online.
- Respondents in Alberta (26 per cent) and Ontario (25 per cent) are more likely than those in other regions to seek this type of information on the Internet.
- Over half of respondents aged 44 and younger (58 per cent) cite the Internet as their preferred source of information, while only 22 per cent of those aged 45 and older say they would seek information online.
- Those with a high school education or less are not as likely to go to the government for information (13 per cent), while those with a university education are more likely to seek government information (20 per cent vs. 17 per cent nationally).

5.2 PREFERRED METHOD TO GET INFORMATION ABOUT FINANCIAL ABUSE

In addition to asking Canadians about the different sources they would consider consulting for information on the financial abuse of seniors, respondents were also asked (from a list of options) their preferred format in seeking this type of information. A majority of Canadians overall (55 per cent) prefer to access such information online, although this drops to only four in ten (39 per cent) of those 65 and over. About one in six (16 per cent) selected face-to-face presentations or seminars as their preferred method to find information about the abuse of seniors, and one in five cited media as a preferred delivery method (12 per cent for television and eight per cent for newspapers).

Preferred Method to Get Information About Financial Abuse

“If you were looking for information about financial abuse of seniors which of the following formats would be best?”



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n=3002

- Regionally, a higher proportion of respondents in Saskatchewan/Manitoba (24 per cent) cite a preference for information delivered through presentations and seminars, and a decidedly lower preference (47 per cent) for getting this information online.
- Younger Canadians (i.e., respondents between the ages of 25 and 44) overwhelmingly choose the Internet as the best vehicle for accessing information about the financial abuse of seniors (71 per cent), and only nine per cent expressed a preference for presentations/seminars.
- Conversely, only four in ten (39 per cent) of those 65 years of age and older cite a preference for obtaining information about financial abuse online, whereas almost one in four (23 per cent) favour presentations and seminars.

6. PROFILE OF CAREGIVERS

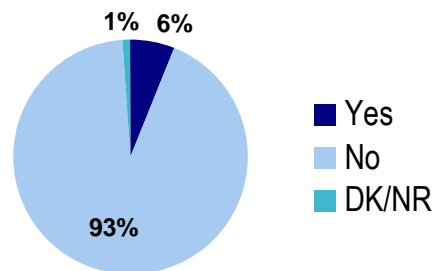
In addition to gathering views on elder abuse, this survey also sought to develop a profile of individuals responsible for caring for elderly persons (age 65 or older).

6.1 CARE PROVIDED TO AN ELDERLY HOUSEHOLD MEMBER

Caregivers perform various tasks in caring for seniors including personal care, assistance with medical treatments or procedures, transportation, and housekeeping. Respondents were asked if they currently provide care to an elderly household member who is 65 years of age or older. An overwhelming majority (93 per cent) say they are not caring for an elderly household member, while six percent of respondents say that they are.

Care Provided to an Elderly Household Member

“Do you currently provide care to an elderly household member who is age 65 or older?”



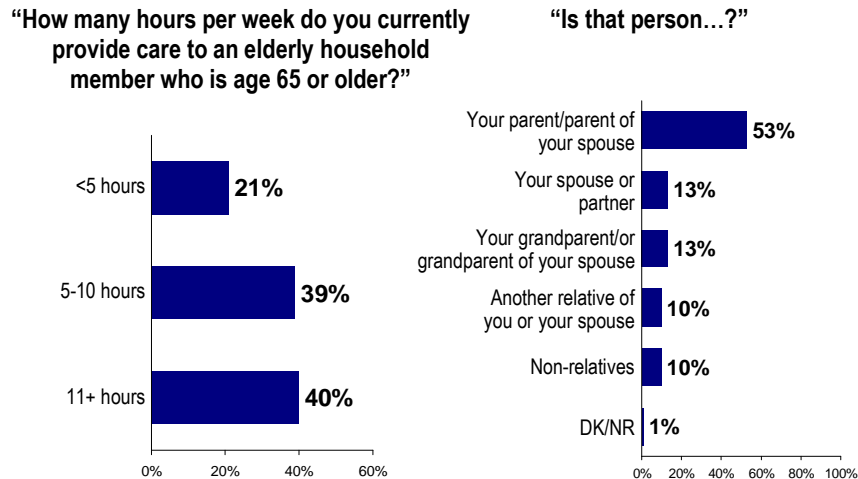
- Regionally, residents in Quebec are almost twice as likely (ten per cent) as the general population to be providing care for an elderly member in their household. Results show similar numbers for respondents in visible minority groups, where one in ten (ten per cent) report caring for an elderly household member.

- Almost one in ten of those between the ages of 45 and 64 (nine per cent) say they are currently providing care of an elderly person in their household, whereas just five per cent of younger respondents (i.e., those aged 44 and under) report caring for an elderly household member.
- Those with higher income levels also report caring for an elderly household member in larger numbers (ten per cent) than the national average.

6.2 NUMBERS OF HOURS PER WEEK TO PROVIDE CARE AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ELDERLY HOUSEHOLD MEMBER

Respondents who said they currently provide care for an elderly household member were asked how many hours of care per week they provide. One in five (21 per cent) spend less than five hours per week caring for an elderly household member, however, a large proportion of these respondents say they spend five to ten hours per week (39 per cent), or 11 hours or more (40 per cent) providing care for an elder in their home.

Numbers of Hours Per Week to Provide Care



Respondents were also asked to specify the nature of the relationship they have with the elder to whom they are providing care. Just over half of these respondents (53 per cent) indicate they are caring for a parent (their own or their spouse's), and about one in eight (13 per cent) are caring for a grandparent. An equal proportion of respondents say they look after another family relative (ten per cent) or a non-relative (ten per cent) in the home. A further one in eight (13 per cent) say they are caring for their spouse or partner.

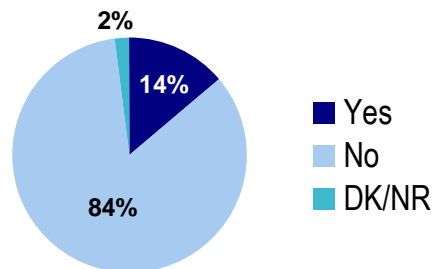
- Residents in Ontario (64 per cent) are more likely than other Canadians to say they provide care for their spouse or partner, whereas a larger proportion of respondents in Quebec (16 per cent) say they are providing care for a non-relative in their home.
- Over six in ten (64 per cent) of these respondents aged 45 to 64 years say they are caring for a parent (their own or their spouse's) living in the household.

6.3 CARE PROVIDED TO AN ELDERLY FAMILY MEMBER NOT LIVING IN HOUSEHOLD

Respondents were also asked if they currently provide care to an elderly family member (aged 65 years or older) who is not living in their household. Results to this question suggest that Canadians are more likely to be providing care for an elderly person outside of the home rather than in their home (14 per cent vs. six per cent inside the home). Nonetheless, a clear majority of respondents (84 per cent) say they are not providing care for an elderly family member outside their home.

Care Provided to an Elderly Family Member Not Living in Household

“Do you currently provide care to an elderly family member who does not live in your household and is age 65 or older?”



- Regionally, results reveal that residents of Ontario are more likely than other Canadians to be caring for an elderly family member outside their home (17 per cent). In contrast, Quebec

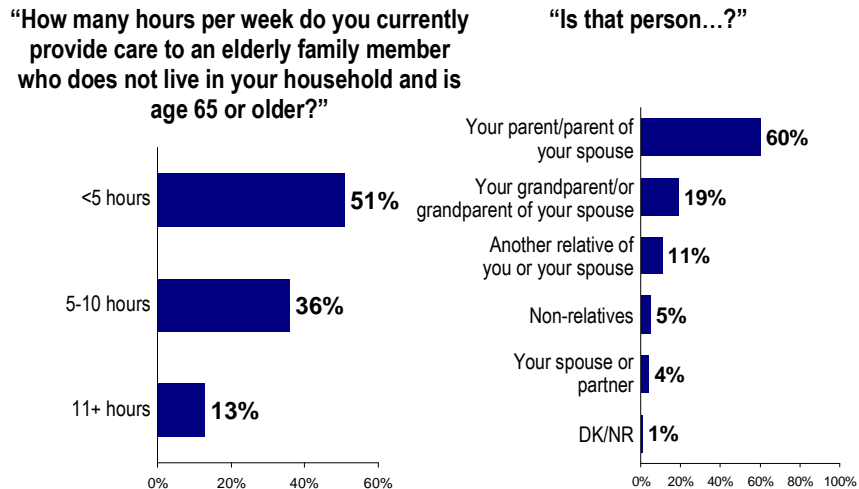
residents are less likely to provide care to an elderly family member outside their household (nine per cent).

- Results also reveal a significant divide between younger and older Canadians when it comes to caring for an elder outside the home: only about one in ten respondents aged 25 to 44 (11 per cent) are providing care for an elder outside the home, while almost twice as many respondents aged 45 to 64 (20 per cent) say they are currently caring for an elderly family member not living in their household.

6.4 NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK TO PROVIDE CARE AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ELDERLY PERSON

Respondents who said they currently provide care for an elderly family member outside their household were asked how many hours of care per week they provide. Results suggest that a majority of these respondents (51 per cent) spend less than five hours per week providing care to an elderly family member outside their home, however, others spend a fairly significant portion of their time caring for an elderly family member living outside their home: 36 per cent say they provide between five and ten hours per week, and 13 per cent devote 11 hours or more per week caring for an elder who does not reside with them.

Numbers of Hours Per Week to Provide Care



- Those with high school education or less are almost twice as likely as the population as a whole to provide 11 hours or more of care per week for an elderly family member outside the home (22 per cent vs. 13 per cent nationally).

These respondents were also asked to specify the nature of the relationship they have with the elder to whom they are providing care. The majority (60 per cent) indicate they are caring for a parent (their own or their spouse's), while one in five (19 per cent) are caring for a grandparent. One in ten (11 per cent) are caring for another family relative, while only four per cent are looking after their spouse or partner. Non-relatives make up just five per cent of the elders being cared for outside the carer's home.

- Those 45-64 years of age are particularly likely to be providing care outside the home to their parents (80 per cent).
- Respondents from visible minority communities are more likely to indicate they provide care for a grandparent outside of their own household (37 per cent), but are less likely to be providing care for a parent (41 per cent).