

## Nursing Science – Abstract Master Thesis

### **Elder abuse in Swiss nursing homes: Do Special Care Units make a difference? A secondary data analysis of the Swiss Nursing Homes Human Resources Project**

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#### **Background**

Several risk factors in the domains of resident-related characteristics, staff outcomes/characteristics and organizational/environmental factors are described as contributing to elder abuse in nursing homes. But, although residents dependent on care due to physical impairment and/or suffering from progressed dementia combined with aggressive behavior are most vulnerable and at risk of being abused, little is known about the frequency of elder abuse on Special Care Units (SCUs) for demented residents.

#### **Aims**

Following aims guided this study: (a) to describe the prevalence of observed emotional abuse, neglect, and physical abuse in Swiss nursing homes, (b) to compare SCUs and Non-SCUs concerning the frequency of observed emotional abuse, neglect, and physical abuse, and (c) to explore the relationship of resident-related characteristics, staff outcomes/characteristics, and organizational/environmental factors with observed elder abuse.

#### **Methods**

Secondary data analysis of the Swiss Nursing Homes Human Resources Project (SHURP), a cross-sectional, multi-center study. Data are based on observed rather than perpetrated elder abuse; therefore, variables were aggregated at the unit level and analyzed using Generalized Estimating Equations. Multilevel linear regression models were used for emotional abuse and multilevel negative binomial regression models for neglect.

#### **Results**

Of 4567 care workers within 385 units and 152 facilities, 50.9% observed emotional abuse, 23.7% neglect, and 1.4% physical abuse. Emotional abuse was significantly more witnessed in SCUs than in Non-SCUs (SCU: 52.9% vs. non-SCU: 47.8%,  $p = .04$ ). There was no significant difference between the unit-types with regard to observed neglect. Lower scores for 'team work and resident safety climate' and higher scores for 'workload' were associated with more observed emotional abuse and neglect.

#### **Conclusions**

More specific research about elder abuse in SCUs and the interaction between work climate and elder abuse is requested. Improving the teamwork and safety climate and reducing work stressors might be promising intervention points to reduce elder abuse.

**Keywords:** Elder abuse, Special care units, health facility environment

#### **Mentors**

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