

Preventing and confronting aggressive behaviour of older people in care

PRAGRESS

Principal Investigators: Dr Martin Power, University of Galway, Ireland

Researchers: Dr Saintuya Dashdondog, University of Galway, Ireland

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Co-ordinator and collaborators: Professor Bettina Flaiz, Duale Hochschule Baden-Wuerttemberg, Stuttgart; Amelie Buchler, Duale Hochschule Baden-Wuerttemberg, Stuttgart; Ruth Dankbar, Wohlfahrtswerk Fur-Baden Wuerttemberg, Germany; Oscar Zanutto and Davide Tuis, Istituto per Servizi di Ricovero e Assistenza agli Anziani, Italy; Asimina Brouzou and Konstantina Lakovou, Challedu; Georgios Koumanakos, Corporation for Succor and Care of Elderly and Disabled, Frodizo, Greece; Dr Mari Lahti and Johanna Berg, Turun Ammattikorkeakoulu OY, Finland

Aim and Objectives: To develop an online education and training platform for health and social care professionals and informal carers to support them in preventing, managing and coping with aggressive incidents in caring for older people.

Design/Methods: Interviews were conducted with formal and informal carers in each of the partner countries. The results of these interviews were combined with a review of the literature on aggression and violence in care of older people. These informed the development of the education and training materials and the online platform. The materials were broken down into a number of modules, which covered topics such as triggers and management of aggressive incidents and aggressive behaviour and emotions. In addition, were modules on how to use the course and a module to support organisations in establishing suitable strategies to help manage aggression and violence.

Public Patient Involvement: A key element of the development of the materials was the involvement of expert carers with many years of experience in the care of older people. At a two-day event in Athens, Greece, expert carers from each of the partner countries worked with the project partners to enhance the materials and the platform. Validation of the materials and platforms was also carried out by the project partners in each of their respective nations.

Results: In spite of cultural, social and structural differences between the health and social care systems of the partner nations, there was a remarkable similarity in the responses of the participants to incidents of aggression and violence, regardless of whether the participant was a formal or informal carer. Shock and dismay often turned to self-blame in the wake of incidents, which was compounded when organisational cultures and practices tended to normalise such incidents as simply part of the job. Informal carers also appeared to harbour a sense of guilt or shame that the occurrence of episodes of aggression or violence was in some way an indication that they were failing to adequately care for their loved one. This tended to stifle help-seeking, which further isolated informal carers in particular.

Dissemination: The project was officially launched at a conference in Stuttgart, German in July 2023. In addition, to this conference and the website and newsletters, each of the project partners held multiplier events in their respective nations. <https://pragress.eu/>

Knowledge Translation: The education and training materials are available in multiple languages (German, English, Italian, Finnish, Greek) and can be used by formal and informal carers and organisations to reduce incidents of violence and aggression, and to support carers of older people who have experienced such episodes.