

# Domestic and elder abuse

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- Rationale:
  - A relatively common experience: estimated to be 5-10% of the English population aged 50 or older.
  - Large impacts on health, wellbeing and economic security.
  - Significant policy concern.
  - But limited coverage in the HRS family of surveys.
  - Panel, household and interdisciplinary design allows for a thorough investigation of: risk factors, prevalence, dynamics and consequences.
  - But may benefit by including some additional topics (fear, perceived social restrictions, etc.)
- Ideally coverage would include:
  - Neglect;
  - Psychological abuse;
  - Physical abuse;
  - Sexual harassment/abuse;
  - Financial abuse;
  - And establish the context and history of the abuse.

# Ethics and approach

- Ethics/safeguarding
  - Estimates suggest that around half of perpetrators are partners, but partners are also participants in the survey.
  - Shared knowledge of questionnaire coverage might put participants at risk.
  - Provision of support – helplines etc – but to perpetrator as well?
  - Possible duty to disclose ongoing abuse.
- Approach
  - Sensitive material, so data collection must be private.
  - Paper, self-administered CAPI, or online self-completion (implications for provision of support, and for completion by those who are most vulnerable)?
- Validity of the instrument
  - Willingness of abused (and perpetrator) to accurately and fully report
  - Use of established instrument (for example, Conflict Tactics Scale), but would need modifications and additions.
  - Level of detail collected – full CTS has 78 items, short CTS has 20 items.
- Development
  - Workshop with academics, policy agencies and advocates.
  - Pilot approach as well as questionnaire.

# Examples

- UK Study of Abuse and Neglect of Older People.
  - Covered neglect, psychological abuse, physical abuse, sexual harassment and financial abuse.
  - Whether experienced mistreatment and specific form of mistreatment.
  - Frequency of mistreatment in last 12 months.
  - Identity of the perpetrator.
  - How the study participant felt.
  - Whether the study participant sought help.

- Conflict Tactics Scale

“No matter how well a couple gets along, there are times when they disagree, get annoyed with the other person, want different things from each other, or just have spats or fights because they are in a bad mood, are tired, or for some other reason. Couples also have many ways of trying to settle their differences. This is a list of things that might happen when you have differences. Please circle how many times you did each of these things in the past year, and how many times your partner did them in the past year.”

- My partner (I) explained his or her side of a disagreement to me.
- I punched or hit my partner with something that could hurt.
- I used force (like hitting, holding down, or using a weapon) to make my partner have sex.