

Proportion of abusive episodes in persons with dementia and their informal caregivers during the Covid-19 pandemic

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Background

The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in many restrictions, especially related to older persons with an increased risk of serious illness and death. These restrictions have affected home-dwelling persons with dementia (PWD) and their informal caregivers in many ways:

- Reduced access to formal and informal help and support
- Decreased social interactions

Fear of being infected/infecting others may also elevate strain on informal caregivers and increase the risk of abusive episodes.

Methods

A cross-sectional study of informal caregivers of PWD. Data were collected through anonymous self-reported questionnaires. Questions focused on:

- The PWD
- The informal caregiver
- Their relationship
- Abusive episodes

Data collection: May - September 2021

Results

Table 1. Demographic characteristics (N=337)

	Mean (SD)	n (%)
Caregivers		
Age	67.0 (12.1)	
Female		226 (67.5)
Spouse/partner of PWD		212 (62.9)
Co-resides with PWD		217 (64.6)
PWD		
Age	78.9 (8.0)	
Female		166 (49.3)

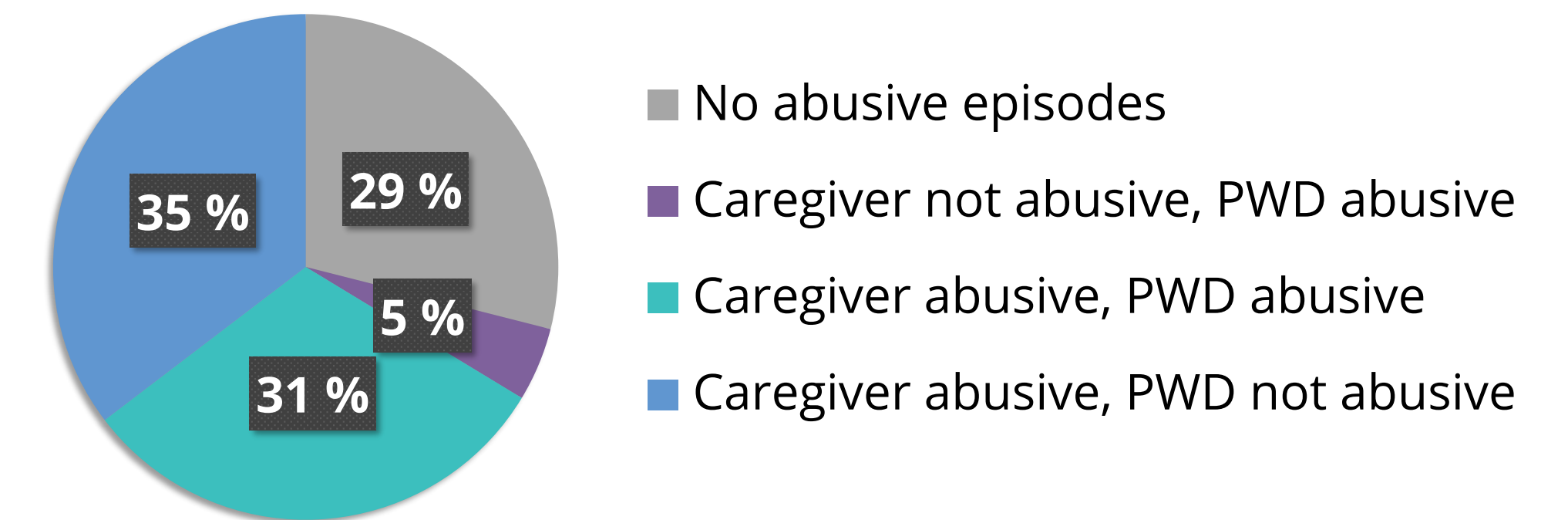


Figure 2. Proportions of overall abusive episodes (N=297)

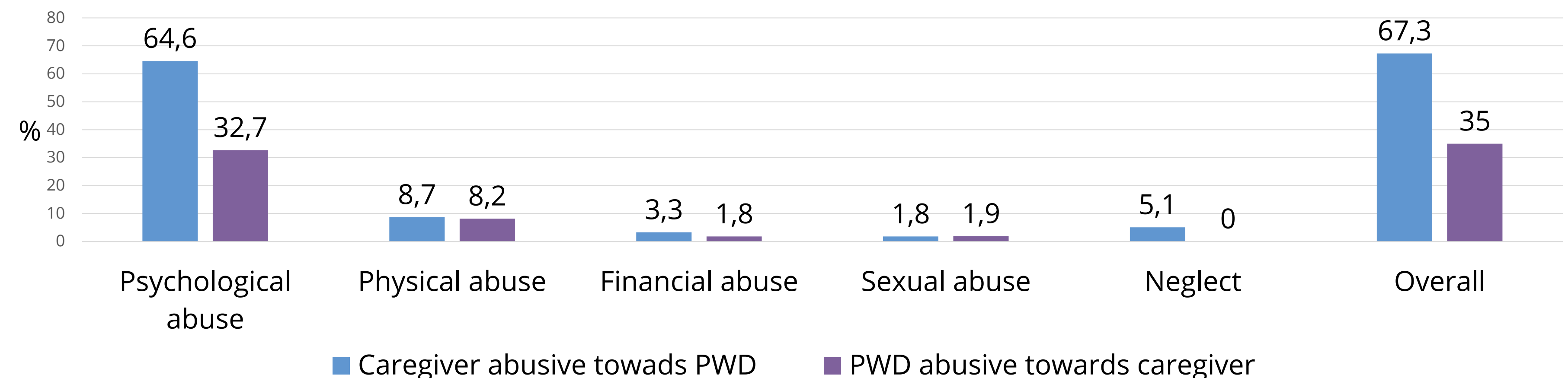


Figure 1. Proportions of abusive episodes within subtypes of abuse

Conclusions

In this study, it was more common for the informal caregivers to commit possible abusive acts than for them to experience similar acts being committed against themselves by the PWD. In total, 67.3% of the informal caregivers reported committing potentially abusive acts, and further research should investigate whether the occurrence will be different post-Covid.

Acknowledgments

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