

# Identifying Distinctions and Commonalities of EM and Late-Life IPV in ADRD Caregiving Dyads

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## BACKGROUND

- There has been theoretical discussion about late-life intimate partner violence (IPV) being a distinct concept from elder mistreatment (EM).
- However, there has been little empirical data that aims to illustrate any differences between late-life IPV and spousal EM.
- **Purpose:** To explore and identify differences and similarities between late-life IPV and elder mistreatment by a spouse or intimate partner.

## METHODS

**Participants:** Spousal/intimate partner caregivers who reported in the BT Study either experiencing or perpetrating IPV at any point in time or EM within the last year (N=10)

**Data collection:** Semi-structured Zoom or telephone interviews

**Interview Topics:** Relationship history, quality, and dynamics over time; occurrences of conflict, tension, and abuse before and after onset of dementia; family violence and household dysfunction in childhood; coping and resilience

**Analysis:** Transcript review to identify broad themes and to develop coding schema; inductive coding using NVivo software to organize data and identify emerging and recurring themes

**"History of relationship abuse and conflict before dementia onset, childhood experiences with family violence, and perpetrator intent were key characteristics of late-life intimate partner violence."**



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## KEY PRELIMINARY RESULTS

### Distinctions of Late-life IPV

- Abuse and major conflict was present throughout the relationship, even before onset of dementia.
- At least one partner in the dyad experienced some form of family violence and household dysfunction in childhood.

**"...his father was doing drugs, and the mother kicked the father out... some issues there that he needs to...address...he's just kind of despises women because of that."**

- Abused caregivers were more likely to blame the abuse on care receivers and their personal characteristics and choices rather than attribute it to their dementia symptoms.

**"I don't blame the physical abuse on his dementia. I blame the physical abuse on his anger...because he's narcissistic, he thinks that it's okay, that it's acceptable."**

### Commonalities between Late-life IPV and EM

- Abuse and conflict increased with progression of dementia.

**"his dementia and Alzheimer's...is getting worse, it's just making him more angry...it's making him more bitter and is making him more impatient."**

- Main source of abuse and conflict arose from performing caregiving tasks.

**"I was trying to push my husband into the bathroom so he could use the toilet...and he didn't want to go in the bathroom...he shoved me. I hit my head against the wall. Bloody on my head."**

## DISCUSSION

- Clarifying older victims' experiences and histories can help to identify risk factors, develop age-inclusive resources and services, and encourage collaboration between aging and domestic violence service providers.

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