

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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