

RESEARCH

Elderly abuse in the municipality of Chilcuautila, Hidalgo, Mexico

Maltrato en el adulto mayor en el municipio de Chilcuautila, Hidalgo, México

Maus-tratos a idosos no município de Chilcuautila, Hidalgo, México

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Abstract

Introduction: The percentage of older adults aged 60 years and older has increased significantly both globally and nationally. However, this increase has led to an increase in mistreatment, and it is crucial to understand how this impacts quality of life. **Objective:** To determine elder abuse in the municipality of Chilcuautila, Hidalgo. **Methodology:** Quantitative, descriptive and cross-sectional study. This study was carried out on 301 older adults through non-probabilistic sampling, who were residents of the municipality, were aware of the abuse and were affected by any type of abuse, excluding those who for any reason dropped out of the study. A questionnaire with sociodemographic data and the Geriatric Scale of Elderly Abuse was used; after informed consent, the Declaration of Helsinki and the General Health Law on Research were followed. Data were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. **Results:** 53.2% were women and 46.8% were men. The prevalence of abuse was 44.2% in older adults for at least one type of abuse. The types of abuse were psychological, 21.3 %, physical, 8.6 %, financial, 6.3 %, neglect, 6.3 %, and sexual,

1.7 %. **Conclusion:** This study determined that abuse did indeed occur among older adults in the municipality of Chilcuautla. It is believed that it could serve as a basis for future research in diverse populations and regions, and could even help nursing staff implement individualized care interventions for each individual.

Key words: Elderly; Elderly abuse; Quality of life (DeCS).

Resumen

Introducción: El porcentaje de adultos mayores de 60 años y más ha aumentado significativamente tanto a nivel mundial como nacional. No obstante, el aumento de esto ha llevado a un incremento en el maltrato, y es crucial entender cómo esto impacta la calidad de vida. **Objetivo:** Determinar el maltrato en el adulto mayor en el municipio de Chilcuautla, Hidalgo. **Metodología:** Estudio cuantitativo, descriptivo y transversal. En 301 adultos mayores, por muestreo no probabilístico, que fueran residentes del municipio, tuvieran conocimiento del maltrato y se vieran afectados por cualquier tipo de este, excluyendo a los que por cualquier motivo abandonaran el estudio. Se utilizó un cuestionario con datos sociodemográficos y Escala Geriátrica de maltrato al adulto mayor; previo consentimiento informado, se apegó a la Declaración de Helsinki y a la Ley General de Salud en materia de investigación. Los datos se analizaron mediante frecuencias y porcentajes. **Resultados:** El 53.2 % fueron mujeres y 46.8 % hombres. La prevalencia de maltrato fue 44.2 % en adultos mayores por al menos un tipo de maltrato. Los tipos de maltrato fueron: psicológico 21.3 %, físico 8.6 %, económico 6.3 %, negligencia 6.3 % y abuso sexual 1.7 %. **Conclusiones:** En este estudio se pudo determinar que sí existió maltrato en el adulto mayor del municipio de Chilcuautla, sin embargo, sirve de base para futuras investigaciones en las diversas poblaciones y regiones, e incluso ayudaría a que el personal de enfermería pueda llevar a cabo intervenciones de cuidado individualizado para cada uno.

Palabras clave: Adulto mayor; Maltrato de mayores; Calidad de vida (DeCS).

Abstrato

Introdução: A percentagem de idosos com 60 anos ou mais tem aumentado significativamente, tanto a nível mundial como nacional. No entanto, esse aumento levou a um aumento dos maus-tratos aos idosos, e é crucial entender como isso afeta a qualidade de vida. **Objetivo:** Determinar os maus-tratos a idosos no município de Chilcuautla, Hidalgo. **Metodologia:** Estudo quantitativo, descritivo e transversal. Em 301 idosos, por amostragem não probabilística, que eram residentes no município, tinham conhecimento de maus-tratos e foram afetados por qualquer tipo de maus-tratos, excluindo aqueles que por qualquer motivo deixaram o estudo. Foi utilizado um questionário com dados sócio-demográficos e a Escala Geriátrica de Maus Tratos a Idosos; após consentimento informado, foram seguidas a Declaração de Helsínquia e a Lei Geral de Saúde sobre Pesquisa. Os dados foram analisados através de frequências e percentagens. **Resultados:** 53,2 % eram mulheres e 46,8 % eram homens. A prevalência de maus-tratos a idosos foi de 44,2 % para pelo menos um tipo de maus-tratos. Os tipos de maus-tratos foram: psicológicos 21,3 %; físicos 8,6 %; económicos 6,3 %; negligência 6,3 %; e abuso sexual 1,7 %. **Conclusões:** Este estudo determinou que, de fato, houve abuso entre idosos no município de Chilcuautla. Acredita-se que ele possa servir de base



para pesquisas futuras em diversas populações e regiões, podendo até mesmo auxiliar a equipe de enfermagem a implementar intervenções de cuidado individualizadas para cada indivíduo.

Palavras-chave: Idosos; Maus-tratos a idosos; Qualidade de vida (DeCS).

Introduction

The aging process is the last life cycle in which the human being goes through, in which changes arise, both physical, cognitive and psychosocial ⁽¹⁻³⁾, these are involved by genetic, environmental and psychological factors ^(4,5). All of the above has been changing over time due to the increase in life expectancy. Currently it has been lower than in previous decades ⁽⁶⁻⁸⁾, since according to the World Health Organization (WHO), it was estimated that between 2020 and 2030 the percentage of older adults aged 60 years and over would increase by 34 % ⁽⁹⁾, while the Basic Statistics of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) in the State of Hidalgo refer that there are 250,715 older adults (OA), of which 46 % were men and 53 % were women. The average life expectancy for men is 72 years and for women 77 years of age ⁽¹⁰⁾.

Abuse is a global and national problem, as it has had a great impact on communities and vulnerable populations, as in the case of OA ^(11,12). At this stage, the OA is characterized as the most at risk because they are treated as nuisances or uncomfortable presences in society ⁽¹²⁾. According to WHO ⁽¹³⁾, OA abuse is an act or transgression to the integrity of an adult and/or helpless person that either has occurred only once or is repeated systematically, whether committed by a caregiver or another related or trusted person in the life of the affected person, who harms or causes suffering and helplessness against the elderly person. Abuse has serious consequences on the health and well-being of older adults; these abuse can be physical, verbal, psychological/emotional, sexual, and financial ⁽¹⁴⁾.

Abuse can take place in the family, in specialized or residential services and facilities, in health care institutions, in transportation and on the street ⁽¹⁵⁾. Many older adults are abused, usually by a



caregiver. Although the figures on OA abuse do not reflect the reality, because most of the abused older adults do not report it ⁽¹⁶⁾. The reasons for this vary. It may be because they do not accept that they are being abused, they are afraid of retaliation, or because they believe it will be temporary. It may also mean that they want to protect their abuser or do not know which authority to turn to, but their physical or cognitive condition does not prevent them from filing a complaint ^(16,17).

In recent years the problem has increased, since one out of every six older adults worldwide suffers many types of abuse; according to WHO, in Mexico it was estimated that between 8.1 % and 18.6 % of older adults suffer some type of abuse ⁽¹⁸⁾.

In 2024, according to data from the National Institution of Hidalgo, 80.5 % of older adults claimed to be subject to mistreatment, generally due to the dispossession of their material goods (homes or property) by family members ⁽¹⁹⁻²¹⁾. This research conducted in the OA in the municipality of Chilcuautila, Hidalgo, Mexico, is a first approach to this problem, given that there is no scientific evidence to indicate whether in this region OAs are abused. For this reason, the research question was: Is there abuse in the OA in the municipality of Chilcuautila? The answer to this could be a basis for future research on this variable and in the future develop nursing interventions focused on improving quality of life in this group.

Methodology

A quantitative study, with a descriptive and cross-sectional approach ^(22,23). A non-probabilistic convenience sampling was performed, obtaining a sample of 301 MA ^(24,25). Inclusion criteria were considered to be: OAs of both genders, residents of the municipality, with knowledge of abuse and affected by any type of abuse; those OAs who for any reason dropped out of the study were excluded.

A sociodemographic questionnaire was applied to obtain information on age, gender, marital status, schooling, occupation, and financial support from the government; subsequently, the Geriatric



Scale of Elderly Abuse was applied, which consists of 22 items that are categorized into physical, psychological, neglect, financial, and sexual abuse, with responses that are valued differently, of which scores of 0 or ≥ 1 can be assigned. The overall range can vary between 0= no abuse and ≥ 1 = general abuse. It has a Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.83 in the Mexican population ^(20,26,27), it should be noted that for this study the reliability of the instrument was 0.72 with Cronbach's alpha, which is acceptable.

Data collection was carried out with prior authorization from the Town Mayor for the application of the questionnaire, with the approval of the ethics committee of the Escuela Superior with registration number 2021-I-XVIII-4. And was also based on the Declaration of Helsinki at the international level and the General Health Law on research ^(28,29) at the national level. The nursing professionals went to the homes considering the ease of access and availability of the OAs. During January to June 2022, they were invited to participate by means of verbal invitation, and, if they accepted, they signed the informed consent form. The questionnaire was completed in approximately 20 minutes.

Data analysis was performed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24, obtaining frequencies and percentages for the sociodemographic variables and abuse ⁽³⁰⁾.

Results

The study was made up of 53.2 % of women. The age variable was found ranging from 60 to 69 years, amounting to 45.9 %. The predominant marital status of OAs was common-law marriage in 40.9 % of the cases; elementary school studies were the most common, amounting to 81.4 %; housewife was the most frequent occupation amounting to 48.5 % and, finally, 76.4 % reported that they receive financial support from the government, (Table 1).



Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics of older adults in the municipality of Chilcuautila, 2022 (n=301)

Variables		f	%
Age	60 - 69	138	45.9
	70 - 79	107	35.7
	80 - 89	55	18.2
	90 - 99	1	.3
Gender	Male	141	46.8
	Female	160	53.2
Marital status	Single	15	5.0
	Married	111	36.9
	Divorced	3	1.0
	Widower/Widow	49	16.3
Schooling	Common-law marriage	123	40.9
	Illiterate	49	16.3
	Elementary school	245	81.4
	Secondary school	7	2.3
Occupation	Housewife	146	48.5
	Employee	6	2.0
	Retired	5	1.7
	Merchant	7	2.3
	Laborer	9	3.0
	Peasant	117	38.9
Financial support (Government)	None	11	3.7
	Yes	230	76.4
	No	71	23.6

Source: Own-development

The results obtained from the application of the Geriatric Scale of OAs abuse showed that among OA in the municipality of Chilcuautila, 44.2 % presented at least one type of abuse, as follows: psychological, 21.6 %; physical, 8.6 %; financial, 6.3 %; neglect, 6.3 %; and sexual, 1.7 %; however, 55.8 % reported not having experienced any type of abuse, (Table 2).

Table 2. Results of the Geriatric Scale of Elderly Abuse in the municipality of Chilcuautila, 2022 (n=301)

Variable	Shows abuse	
	No	Yes
	F (%)	F (%)
Psychological	59 (19.6)	64 (21.3)
Financial	33 (11)	19 (6.3)
Physical	41 (13.6)	26 (8.6)
Neglect	27 (9)	19 (6.3)
Sexual	8 (2.6)	5 (1.7)

Source: Own-development



Discussion

Based on the objective of determining abuse in the OA of the municipality of Chilcuautila, it was determined that abuse in the OAs did occur. However, it should be noted that the highest percentage of abused OAs were women in the age range of 60 to 69 years, who showed at least one type of abuse. However, although psychological and physical abuse predominated, there were lower rates of financial, neglect and sexual abuse. These results matched other studies that reported lower results, but in any case, it must be emphasized that women in this age group are those who face the greatest abuse. This may be due to the fact that they present diverse health, financial, social and emotional needs. This situation becomes more evident when the dependence of the OA on the aggressor is greater, or when the victim is in a situation of greater vulnerability. In addition, limitations arise that involve the validity of the OA and prevent them from relating adequately with their environment ⁽³¹⁻³³⁾.

A previous study pointed out that the variability in the prevalence of abuse found in different studies may be due to geographical differences and the impact of quality of life over the years ^(34,35). However, understanding elder abuse is of utmost importance because it provides a snapshot of the quality of life associated with various factors, affecting not only lifespan but also life expectancy. The results obtained in this study serve as a basis for future research in diverse populations and regions, and could even help nursing personnel to implement individualized care interventions for each of the OAs.

Conclusions

After analyzing this research, the older adults who participated in the municipality of Chilcuautila reported at least one type of abuse. These types of abuse included psychological, physical, financial, neglect and sexual, with the most affected group being the females in the 60 and 69 age range, who lived in a free union, had primary education and were dedicated to the home. This



problem can vary according to the level of quality of life, as well as the region in which the study is carried out and the life expectancy that the person maintains.

Today, awareness of elder abuse is of great importance in society, as it determines their full life expectancy, which will also help them achieve a good quality of life. It is recommended that this study serve as a basis for further research or studies related to abuse in OA. It could be applied to OAs from other populations and regions, to see the similarities or contrasts between them. It is proposed to implement interventions to improve the quality of life of OAs in the municipality of Chilcuautila.

Conflict of Interest

The authors stated that there was no conflict of interest.

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The authors stated that they have not used any type of artificial intelligence resources in any of the sections of this manuscript.

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