

## Prevalence of Suspected Elderly Abuse in Bahrain at Primary Health Care Settings: A Cross-Sectional Study

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** With the global rise of elderly population, the numbers of disabled older people with vulnerabilities requiring more care and support will grow. Elder abuse, a commonly overlooked sensitive issue, is a violation to human rights and public health. The rate of abuse is subject to variation according to region. Pooled prevalence from metanalysis is 10%. Data in the Middle East and Arabian Gulf region (including Bahrain) are lacking.

This study aims at estimating the prevalence of elder abuse amongst elderly attendees of health care centers in Bahrain.

**Methods:** A Cross sectional study targeting Bahrainis aged 65 years and above who attended health centers in the 4 health regions across the country. A 295 of the elderly sample were interviewed from 12 out of the 27 health centers that were approached. Data was collected across 2 weeks. Written informed consent was obtained and Hwalek Sengstock Elder Abuse Screening Tool was used as a guide during the private interviews. A score of four and above was used to achieves maximum sensitivity and specificity.

**Results:** The study revealed the estimated prevalence of 5.1% (95% confidence interval 2.6%-7.6%) of elder abuse. Around 16% of the elderly reported history of some form of abuse. No significant differences in abuse status of the participants were observed with respect to gender, age, marital status, education level, income, living arrangement, and employment status ( $p>0.05$ ). Having one or more chronic conditions, is associated with 6.9 times increased risk of abuse (p value 0.027, Confidence Interval 2.2- 4.28<sup>s</sup>). History of previous abuse is associated with 7 times increased risk of being a victim of another abuse (P value <0.01).

**Conclusion:** With abuse occurring 1 in every 20 elders in Bahrain, a proper protocol should be adopted to screen and intervene. More efforts should be directed towards training caregivers and educating and empowering the elders.

**Keywords:** Elder abuse, Perpetrators, Elder abuse in Bahrain, Caregivers, Prevalence

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