



Two Victorian firsts, Elder Abuse action plan and screening tool

The National Ageing Research Institute has launched Victoria's first action plan to tackle elder abuse.

The plan was developed by NARI with support from Seniors Rights Victoria, the Office of Public Advocate, and community service providers. The Community Action Plan for Victoria was funded by Gandel Philanthropy.

The plan highlighted several priorities, including the need to clarify the relationship between family violence and elder abuse; raise community awareness of elder abuse and promote positive images of older people to reduce ageism; increase ways to help older people disclose elder abuse without fear, and provide education and training on elder abuse for all health professionals in health and aged care services.

NARI Director Associate Professor Briony Dow said that the Institute's research has shown that tackling elder abuse is difficult not least because older people do not want to talk about their experiences due to deep shame and fear of further abuse.

The National Ageing Research Institute has received almost \$60,000 from the State Trustees Australia Foundation to trial a new Elder Abuse Screening Instrument (AUSI).

In 2016, NARI received an initial \$50,000 in funding towards a project called Finding the Best Elder Abuse Screening Tool. Through the study and also the research for the action plan, NARI identified that there is currently no suitable screening tool for Victorian organisations to use which led to the development of the Australian Elder Abuse Screening Instrument (AuSI).

A Victorian-first, this elder abuse screening instrument aims to identify cases of elder abuse. The tool will be tested and refined through a co-design process with St Vincent's Hospital.

To test its effectiveness, NARI will collect data before and after implementation of the tool on the number of elder abuse cases identified, the number of notifications, and the number of referrals made. Following extensive training, staff will also be tested on their knowledge and confidence in screening for elder abuse.

Dr Bianca Brijnath, NARI's Director of Social Gerontology, is leading the project.

She says that NARI expects the screening tool will be successful in linking at-risk patients to services that can protect and empower them.

Elder abuse is gaining increased attention worldwide due to global population ageing. Population prevalence studies in the UK and Canada have found that approximately 5% of people aged over 65 experience one form of abuse in any one year, with the World Health Organization estimating that 10% of older people globally are victims of abuse.

This Friday, 15 June, is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

Media inquiries: Penny Underwood on (03) 9818 8540.